INTRODUCTION BY
NOEL CLARKE
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RATED M FOR MATURE READERS
LAPD
VOLUME 04
QUESTIONABLE THINGS
STARKINGS • MEDELLIN • MORITAT • CHURCHLAND • ROSHELL • COOK

ELEPHANTMEN

QUESTIONABLE THINGS

STORY & LETTERING
RICHARD STARKINGS

ARTWORK
AXEL MEDELLIN
IAN CHURCHILL
MORITAT
MARIAN CHURCHLAND
ANDRÉ SZYMANOWICZ
CHRIS BURNHAM

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AXEL MEDELLIN

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BOO COOK

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J.G. ROSHELL
of COMICRAFT
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BEDTIME STORIES

AN INTRODUCTION BY NOEL CLARKE

SO IT KIND OF STARTED by accident for me. My reading material was always piled up by the side of the bed; books, scripts, magazines and graphic novels piled so high I could rest a drink on it with a straw and lazily lean over to sip it. It's a habit, not a bad or good one, but a habit nonetheless. I've always needed to read in bed since I was young, and now as an adult I need things to read in bed after the bed has been used for its other uses, and the wife snores contentedly. I love reading, so over the years the piles never seemed to get smaller, the titles in them just rotated.

Then behold the tablet/iPad, whichever you have or like. Newspapers, books, scripts on PDF, comics all in one place and look! "There's an Image Comics app". I scrolled through it, looking at what might take my fancy. With the TV and Movie work, honestly I hadn't been getting to comic shops as much as I used to, or would've liked to. So having an app was heaven.

"Nope, Nope, Nope, Maybe, Yep, Nope, ELEPHANTMEN... BWAH HA HA HA AH AH HA HA HA HA HA. What the fuck? And look, it's created and written by that guy that lettered comics I read when I was a kid".

He'd been a hero of mine, seriously. I loved looking at comics and seeing Richard Starkings and later Comicraft on there, seeing that was a sign of quality for me and my friends, but I thought he's obviously gotten old and senile if he's making a comic where animals talk, especially hippos. I mean elephants I could get past -- we'd had Babar, Dumbo, Tantor from *Tarzan* -- talking elephants is acceptable. Even camels, we've had the camel that smoked cigarettes... but hippos? "Come on man, we all know hippos can't talk." I thought I'd buy issue #1 just to give the old timer a bit of cash... So I did... and I didn't stop.

And here we are at volume 4. I'll admit I was late to this title, and it took many downloads and trips to the comic store to catch up. I love technology but there is still not much that beats the smell of the store and getting that physical copy in your hands. And anyone who has never picked up single issues or collected editions of ELEPHANTMEN, I suggest you do so, now.

This title was amazing from the start, touching upon the mind's wonderings (at least my mind's) whether something like this could really happen? Then relating it to the real world where similar things do actually happen -- the despicable treatment of different races and cultures who are not seen as advanced or civilized as others, and of course experimentation on animals. The sublime writing draws you in and the beautiful artwork tantalizes your eyestalks and makes you forget you're reading about talking animals. It is driven by the well-rounded but flawed characters, and for me I guess that's kind of the point, it shouldn't matter if you are white, black, yellow, green, camel or elephant, we are all flawed but we all deserve freedom and deserve to live the life we wish.

In a time where the comics I've been reading since 1986 have become stale and predictable -- with villains constantly reappearing, heroes dying and returning from the dead, spouting the same lines they always do and seemingly no-one really willing to do something different and bold -- I find myself trawling the shelves for something that is fresh, is bold, is different, looks great and is brilliantly written. ELEPHANTMEN is all those things and more; a vibrant sci-fi world, with humor, darkness, action, and most importantly, sexy ladies.

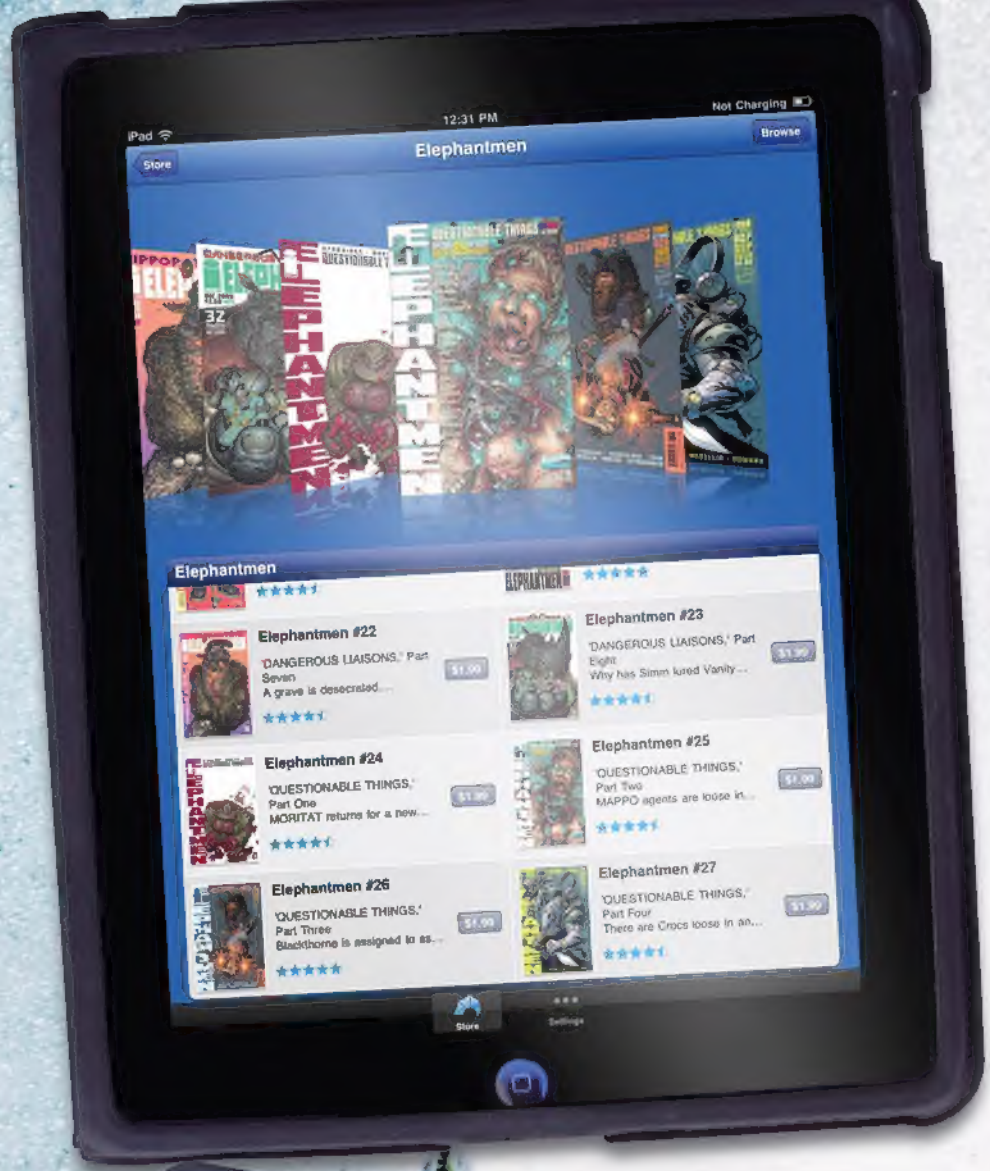
So if you are like me, a person who loves to read so much that you have a pile of fodder by the side of the bed or couch, and seem to never get through it, make sure that the entire run of ELEPHANTMEN is top of the pile. And If you can't get down to your comic store, grab it on your iPad/tablet -- there's no excuse anymore. Just make sure you do whatever you have to do in bed first because believe me, once you start reading this you won't stop.

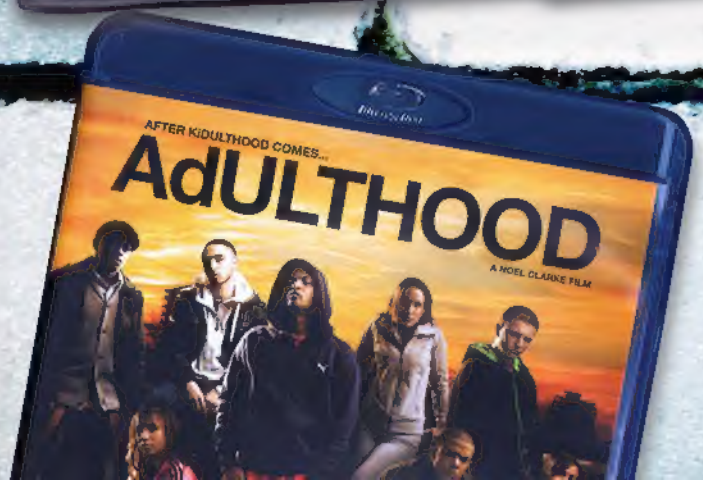
And for the record, not only am I still a fan of Starkings' work, if he keeps creating titles like ELEPHANTMEN I always will be. The only word I can use to describe someone that would create a title as original as this is...Genius.

Or maybe he really is just senile.

The jury is still out.

Noel Clarke
London, England
February 2011





Noel Clarke is an actor, director, screenwriter and action figure from London. He is best known for playing Wyman Norris in Auf Wiedersehen, Pet and the Doctor's first black companion, Mickey Smith in Doctor Who. Clarke appeared in and wrote the screenplay for Kidulthood and wrote, directed and starred in the sequel, Adulthood, for which he won the BAFTA Orange Rising Star Award in 2009. He also penned the episode Combat for Torchwood and in 2010 wrote, directed and starred in 4321.

INFORMATION AGENCY

DATE: 2259	LOCATION: LOS ANGELES

HIP FLASK, EBONY HIDE and OBADIAH HORN are Elephantmen; survivors of a war fought between Africa and China over the European countries ravaged by the deadly FCN virus. That war is long since over and over 15,000 Elephantmen have been rehabilitated by the United Nations and scattered throughout the globe to live peacefully among humans. Flask and Hide work for THE INFORMATION AGENCY as Crime scene investigators.

HORN, perhaps the most celebrated Elephantmen of all, is the Chairman and CEO of Horn Industries, a global business dealing in imports, exports and real estate development, and founder of Ivory Towers, which operates numerous casinos and hotels across the world. Horn's extravagant lifestyle, outspoken manner and his engagement to U.N. refugee spokesperson SAHARA, have made him the subject of intense scrutiny by the media. some suspect that his business dealings are not entirely legal, and it is true that those who speak out against him have been known to disappear without trace, or die in mysterious circumstances. Sahara's father, JOSHUA SERENGHETI, a Los Angeles-based crimelord dealing in the illegal buying and selling of Elephantmen body parts would be happy for Horn himself to die in mysterious circumstances.

Although GRUENWALD, director of the L.A arm of the information Agency, had assigned information Agent-in-training VANITY CASE to help keep Hip Flask out of trouble, he perhaps overlooked Vanity's own tendency for getting into trouble... and the Elephantmen have found themselves once more caught up in a sinister web of intrigue woven by the MAPPO organization. Two repurposed SIMM androids have attempted to reactivate both Flask and Horn... with varying degrees of success...

image

INVINCIBLE

STARKINGS · MORITAT · COOK

QUESTIONABLE THINGS

ONE OF SEVEN

#24

MAR 2010

ACTIVE IMAGES
"COMICRAFT" SINCE 1992

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Secret Weapon

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HIP FLASK

2259: THE ELEPHANTMEN ARE HUMAN/ANIMAL HYBRIDS CREATED BY THE MAPPO CORPORATION TO SERVE AS SUPERSOLDIERS IN A WAR BETWEEN AFRICA AND CHINA. THAT WAR IS OVER AND NOW THERE ARE 15,000 ELEPHANTMEN LIVING IN THE WORLD AMONGST US. HIP FLASK IS AN ELEPHANTMAN WORKING FOR THE INFORMATION AGENCY IN LOS ANGELES, ALONGSIDE ANOTHER SURVIVOR OF THE WAR, EBONY HIDE.

CONTENT WITH HIS ROLE IN THE WORLD OF HUMANS, HIP HAS RECENTLY BEFRIENDED A YOUNG CAB DRIVER BY THE NAME OF MIKI. WHILE CHECKING UP ON EBONY, WHO HAD NOT SHOWED UP FOR WORK, THEY WERE CALLED OUT TO A FIRE AT THE SKYCAB 45 TAXI RANK. THERE, HIP WAS ATTACKED BY AN AGENT OF MAPPO, WHO ATTACHED A STRANGE ROBOTIC DEVICE TO THE BACK OF HIS NECK...

www.hipflask.com/elephantmen

e-mail your letters (and chocolate) to RICHARD@HIPFLASK.COM

ARTWORK BY LADRÖNN

IS IT ME, RABBI, OR AM I SEEING A LITTLE SUNLIGHT BREAK THROUGH THE LAYER OF SMOG BEHIND THE LAYER OF SMOG BEHIND THE LAYER OF SMOG THAT'S SHROUDED LOS ANGELES FOR THE PAST WEEK?
IT'S YOU, HERMAN, BECAUSE, LET'S FACE IT, THIS SHOW IS ALL ABOUT YOU... ALWAYS HAS BEEN, ALWAYS WILL BE...
...IS THE CORRECT ANSWER! BECAUSE, YES, YOU ARE TUNED INTO THE HERMAN STRUMM SHOW STREAMING 24/7 FROM DOGSTAR ONE.
WOOF!
STILL, AT LEAST LOS ANGELENOS CAN STOP WEARING THOSE AWFUL MASKS... WELL, EXCEPT FOR THE ONES THEY USUALLY WEAR!
BUT IF ANY OF YOU LADIES OUT THERE CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE PERSONAL CLIMATE CHANGE WHILE PATCHED INTO THIS BROADCAST, WHY DON'T YOU HEAD OVER TO THE DOGSTAR SHUTTLE AND JOIN ME HERE LIVE AND IN PERSON...?
I KNOW A FEW THINGS THAT WILL HELP YOU LET OFF STEAM, AND, I PROMISE, YOU WILL LEAVE HERE FEELING A LOT COOLER...
WOOF! WOOF!
HOW ABOUT YOU START RIGHT NOW BY TAKING A COLD SHOWER, HERMAN? I KNOW THAT LOOK IN YOUR EYES... HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHY WE HAVE TO BROADCAST OUR SHOW FROM GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT?
YOU WOUND ME, RABBI, THAT'S BELOW THE BELT! NOTHING COOLS MY ARDOR FASTER THAN THE THOUGHT OF PERRY FALBERTSON'S CHILDREN OF GOD COALITION...
ANYWAY, HOW WAS I TO KNOW THAT NUN FROM HOT HABITS WAS HIS DAUGHTER?
ADMIT IT, HERMAN, NOT EVEN MOTHER EARTH IS SAFE AROUND YOU, NO WONDER SHE COVERS HERSELF UP LIKE THAT.
OH YEAH? WELL, MAYBE ALL OF US HERE HAVE DONE A FEW QUESTIONABLE THINGS, RABBI! SHALL I TELL OUR LISTENERS ABOUT YOUR LAST TRIP TO TIJUANA?
I'M AFRAID WE HAVE TO CUT TO COMMERCIAL RIGHT NOW, HERMAN...
YEAH, I THOUGHT YOU'D SAY THAT.
STAY BEHIND ME, GUYS...

LOS ANGELES · 2259

Splash Page Art by André Szymanowicz, after Ladrönn, Colors by Gregory Wright

7 DAYS OF SMOG
CONCLUSION!

WALKING WOUNDED

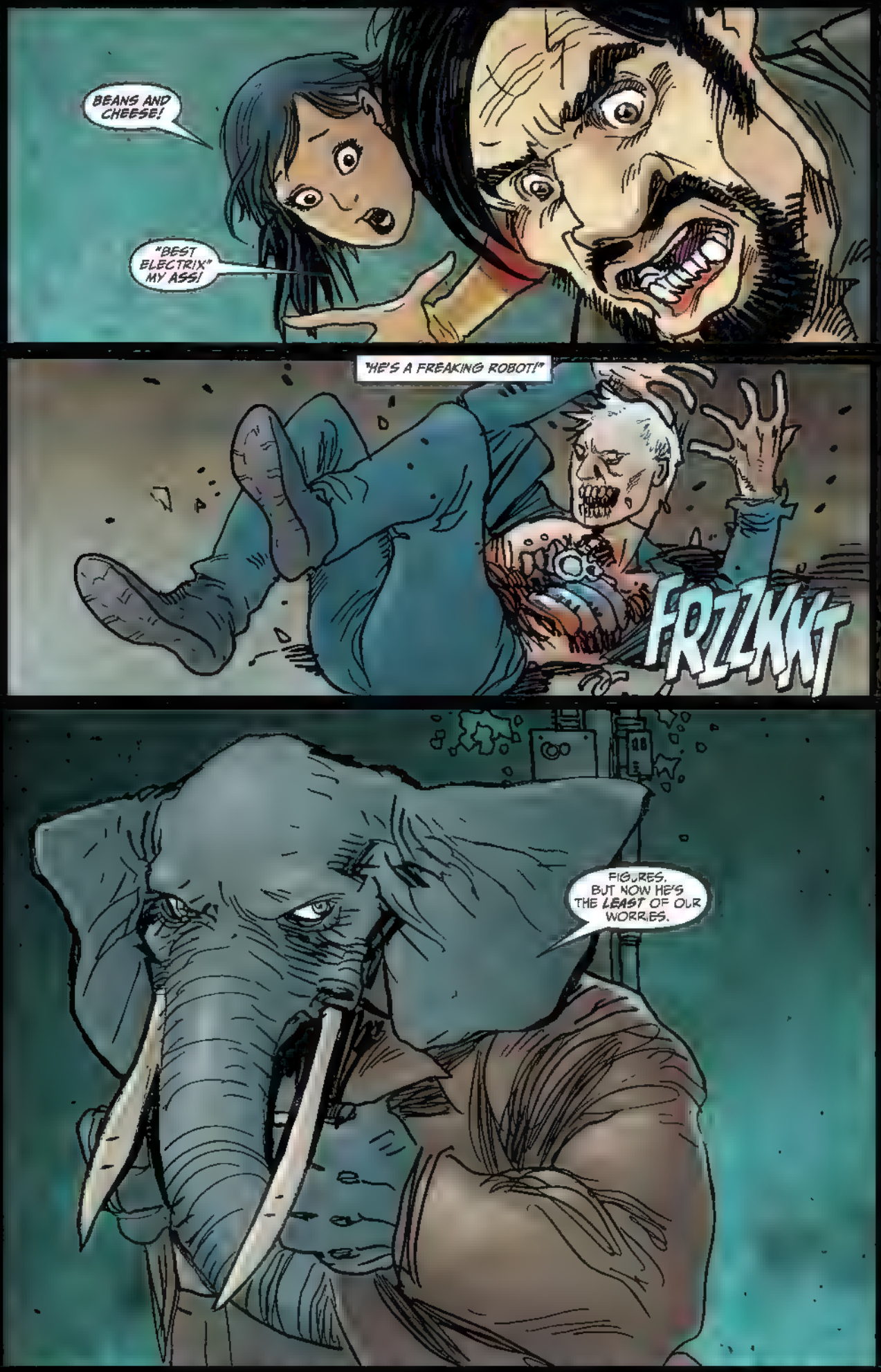
By Starkings & Moritat
Colors by Gregory Wright

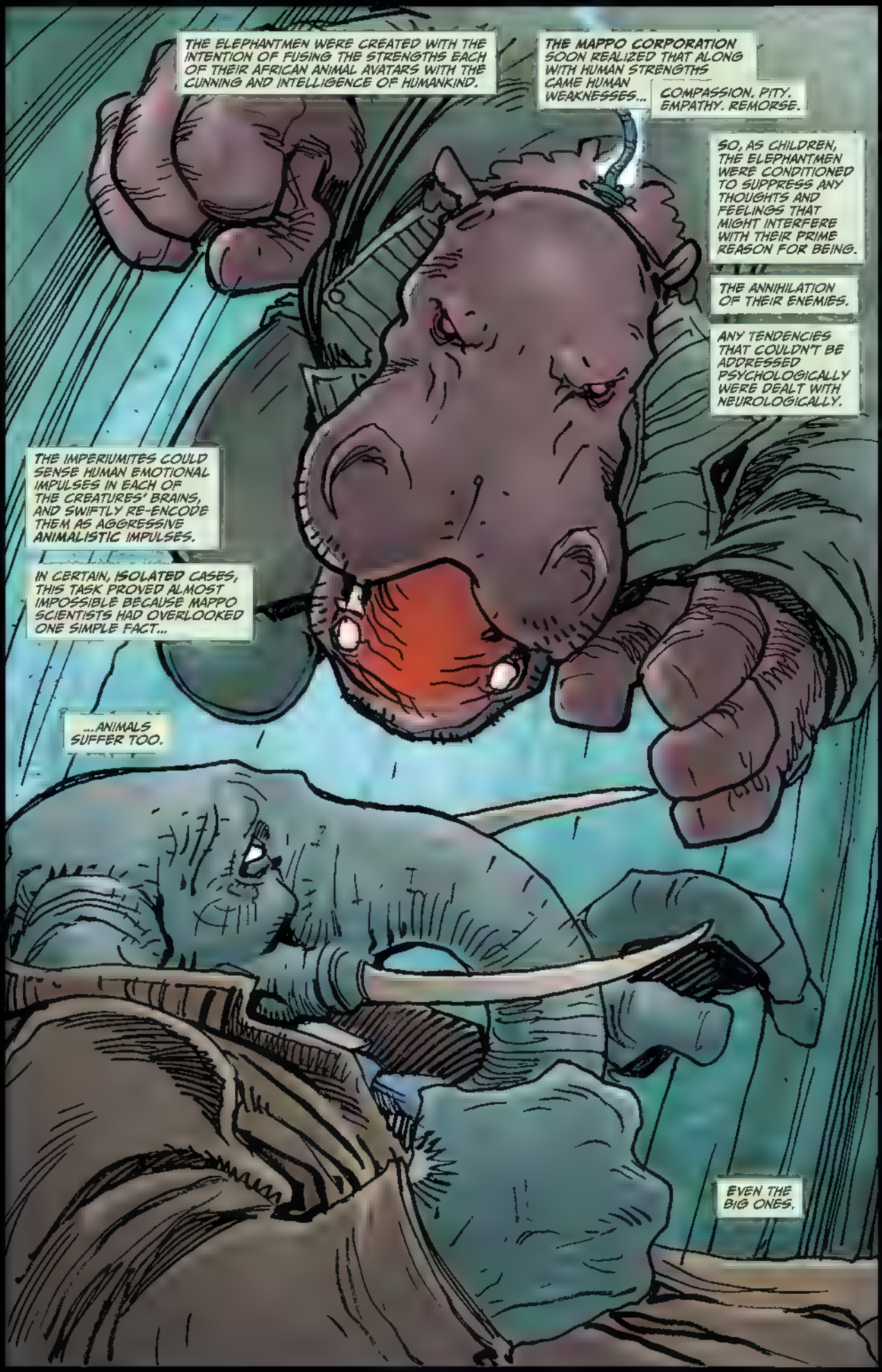
IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, THE US MILITARY SPENT 45 MILLION DOLLARS DEVELOPING PAIN SUPPRESSION IMPLANTS THAT WOULD ALLOW SOLDIERS TO REMAIN FOCUSSED AND ACTIVE IN THE COURSE OF BATTLE.
HIP?!
EBONY... WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM...?
JUST... STAY BACK, MIKI.

Special Thanks to Jan Churchill, Boo Cook, André Syzmanowicz & The Bucce for Art Assists Above and Beyond the Call!

THE DEVICES WERE SO SUCCESSFUL THAT SOME SOLDIERS WERE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR SEVERAL MINUTES AFTER RECEIVING FATAL INJURIES.
URRNH!
THEIR NERVOUS SYSTEMS SIMPLY FAILED TO ACKNOWLEDGE INJURIES OR PAIN.
21
22
THE MAPPO CORPORATION INCORPORATED THIS PAIN SUPPRESSION TECHNOLOGY INTO THE NEUROCHIPS THEY USED TO CONDITION AND CONTROL THE ELEPHANTMEN.
THE CHIPS WERE ATTACHED TO THE BRAIN STEMS OF THE ELEPHANTMEN IN SIMPLE ROBOTIC DEVICES WHICH CAME TO BE KNOWN AS IMPERIUMITES.

WHATEVER IT IS YOU'VE DONE... WHATEVER THAT THING IS...
GET IT OFF OF HIM!
SO THAT HE CAN RETURN TO HIS SO-CALLED LIFE PUSHING PAPERS AROUND FOR THE INFORMATION AGENCY?
NO, I DON'T THINK SO...
KILL THEM! KILL THEM!
KILL THEM ALL!
WRAKT
KKT--
URKKGK!
WHUMP


BEANS AND CHEESE!
"BEST ELECTRIX" MY ASS!
"HE'S A FREAKING ROBOT!"
FRIZZKKT
FIGURES. BUT NOW HE'S THE LEAST OF OUR WORRIES.

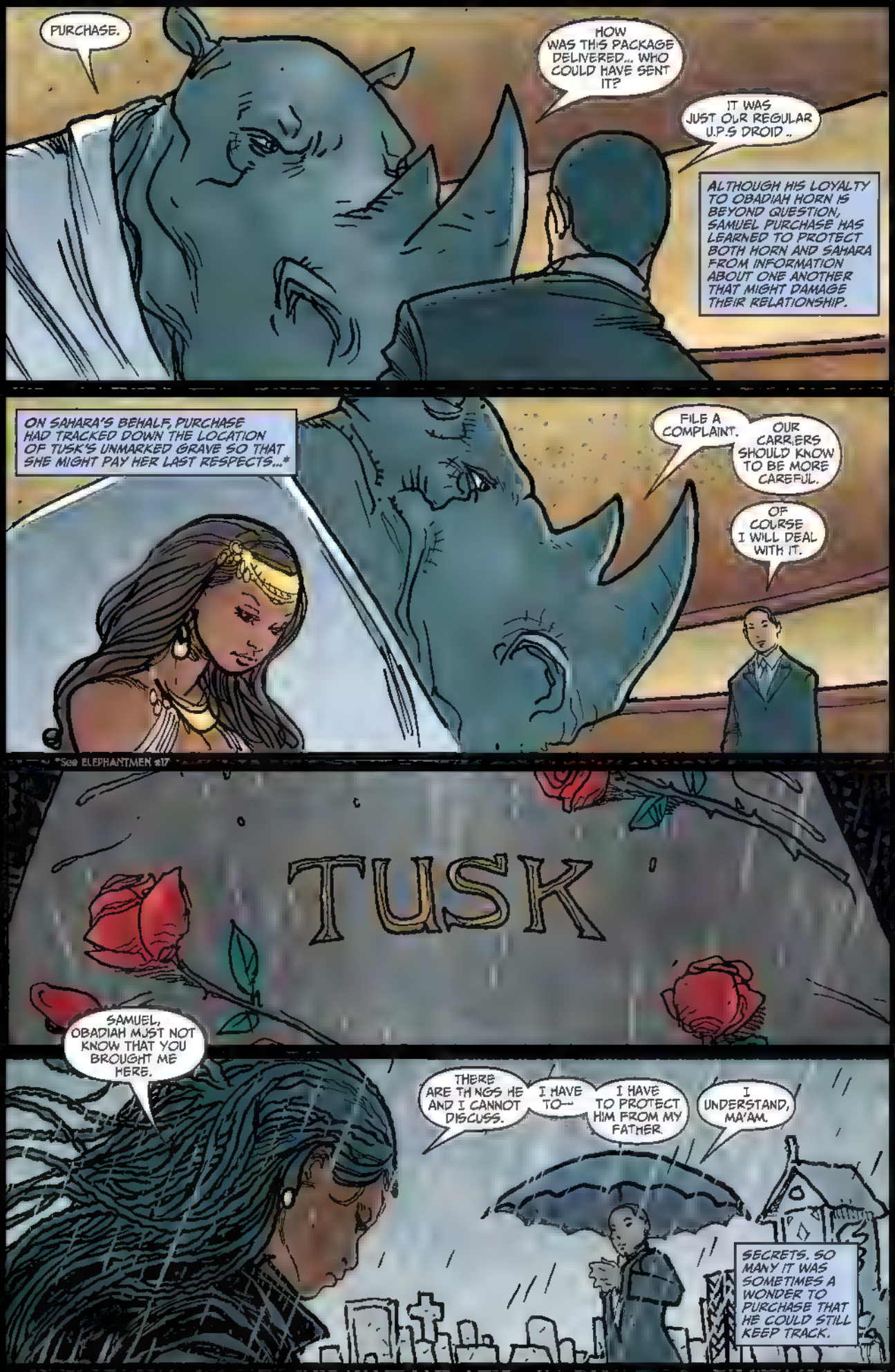

THE ELEPHANTMEN WERE CREATED WITH THE INTENTION OF FUSING THE STRENGTHS EACH OF THEIR AFRICAN ANIMAL AVATARS WITH THE CUNNING AND INTELLIGENCE OF HUMANKIND.
THE MAPPO CORPORATION SOON REALIZED THAT ALONG WITH HUMAN STRENGTHS CAME HUMAN WEAKNESSES...
COMPASSION. PITY. EMPATHY. REMORSE.
SO, AS CHILDREN, THE ELEPHANTMEN WERE CONDITIONED TO SUPPRESS ANY THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS THAT MIGHT INTERFERE WITH THEIR PRIME REASON FOR BEING.
THE ANNIHILATION OF THEIR ENEMIES.
ANY TENDENCIES THAT COULDN'T BE ADDRESSED PSYCHOLOGICALLY WERE DEALT WITH NEUROLOGICALLY.
THE IMPERIUMITES COULD SENSE HUMAN EMOTIONAL IMPULSES IN EACH OF THE CREATURES' BRAINS, AND SWIFTLY RE-ENCODE THEM AS AGGRESSIVE ANIMALISTIC IMPULSES.
IN CERTAIN, ISOLATED CASES, THIS TASK PROVED ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE MAPPO SCIENTISTS HAD OVERLOOKED ONE SIMPLE FACT...
...ANIMALS SUFFER TOO.
EVEN THE BIG ONES.

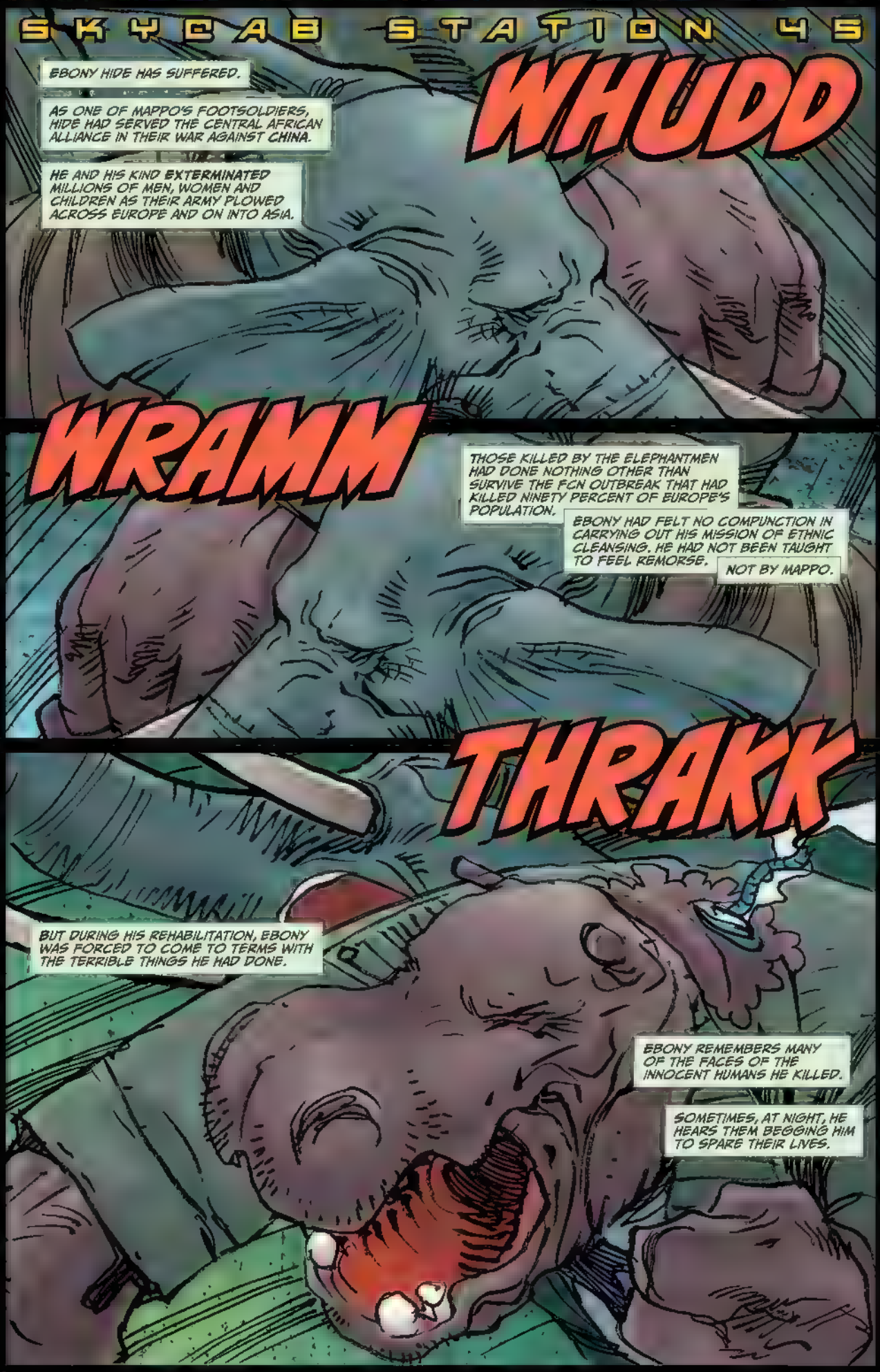
WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?!
IVORY TOWERS
MISTER HORN, I--
MISS SAMARA FAINTED... SHE--
GET AWAY FROM HER--
OBADIAH... NO, SAMJEL WAS JUST TRYING TO HELP...
I WAS... OVERCOME...
FRAGILE

IT'S JUST, THE SMELL...
WHAT—?
WHO WOULD DARE?
TO HELP YOU REMEMBER
TUSK.*
THE RETARD.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #4, 15, 17 & 19
MISTER PURCHASE, GET RID OF THIS.
OOF!

SAHARA, MY LOVE, I KNOW YOU MUST BE DISTRESSED.
I HAVE MANY ENEMIES AND THIS IS SIMPLY AN ATTEMPT TO GET TO ME... BUT, *THINK*... WHO WOULD HAVE SENT THIS TO YOU?
I DON'T --
I DON'T KNOW WHO WOULD DO SUCH A THING.*

*See ELEPHANTMEN #19

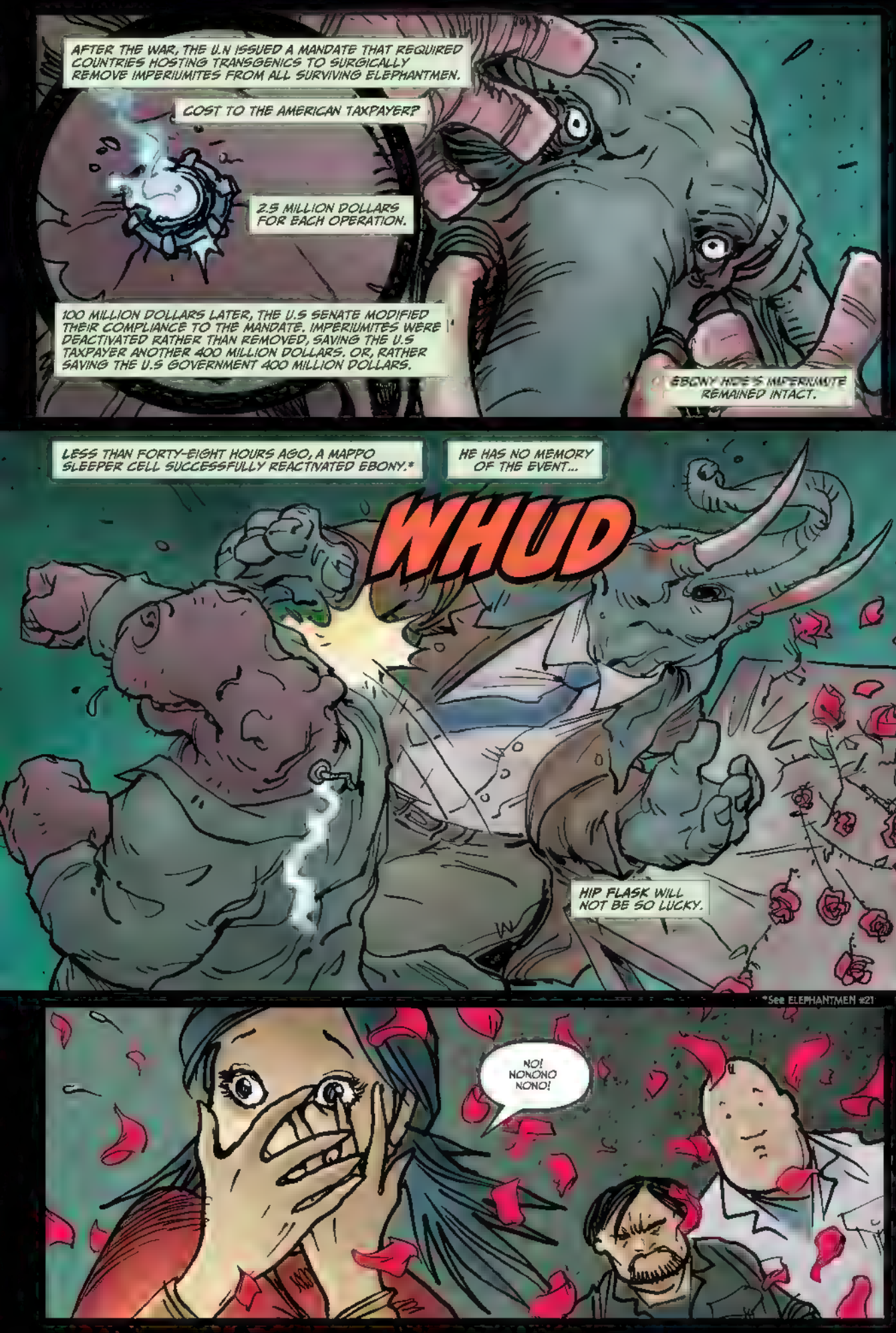

PURCHASE.
HOW WAS THIS PACKAGE DELIVERED... WHO COULD HAVE SENT IT?
IT WAS JUST OUR REGULAR U.P.S DROID..
ALTHOUGH HIS LOYALTY TO OBADIAH HORN IS BEYOND QUESTION, SAMUEL PURCHASE HAS LEARNED TO PROTECT BOTH HORN AND SAHARA FROM INFORMATION ABOUT ONE ANOTHER THAT MIGHT DAMAGE THEIR RELATIONSHIP.
ON SAHARA'S BEHALF, PURCHASE HAD TRACKED DOWN THE LOCATION OF TUSK'S UNMARKED GRAVE SO THAT SHE MIGHT PAY HER LAST RESPECTS...*
FILE A COMPLAINT.
OUR CARRIERS SHOULD KNOW TO BE MORE CAREFUL.
OF COURSE I WILL DEAL WITH IT.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #17
TUSK
SAMUEL, OBADIAH MUST NOT KNOW THAT YOU BROUGHT ME HERE.
THERE ARE THINGS HE AND I CANNOT DISCUSS.
I HAVE TO—
I HAVE TO PROTECT HIM FROM MY FATHER.
I UNDERSTAND, MA'AM.
SECRETS. SO MANY IT WAS SOMETIMES A WONDER TO PURCHASE THAT HE COULD STILL KEEP TRACK.


EBONY HIDE HAS SUFFERED.
AS ONE OF MAPPO'S FOOTSOLDIERS, HIDE HAD SERVED THE CENTRAL AFRICAN ALLIANCE IN THEIR WAR AGAINST CHINA.
HE AND HIS KIND EXTERMINATED MILLIONS OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN AS THEIR ARMY PLOWED ACROSS EUROPE AND ON INTO ASIA.
WHUDD
WRAMM
THOSE KILLED BY THE ELEPHANTMEN HAD DONE NOTHING OTHER THAN SURVIVE THE FCN OUTBREAK THAT HAD KILLED NINETY PERCENT OF EUROPE'S POPULATION.
EBONY HAD FELT NO COMPUNCTION IN CARRYING OUT HIS MISSION OF ETHNIC CLEANSING. HE HAD NOT BEEN TAUGHT TO FEEL REMORSE.
NOT BY MAPPO.
THRAKK
BUT DURING HIS REHABILITATION, EBONY WAS FORCED TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE TERRIBLE THINGS HE HAD DONE.
EBONY REMEMBERS MANY OF THE FACES OF THE INNOCENT HUMANS HE KILLED.
SOMETIMES, AT NIGHT, HE HEARS THEM BEGGING HIM TO SPARE THEIR LIVES.

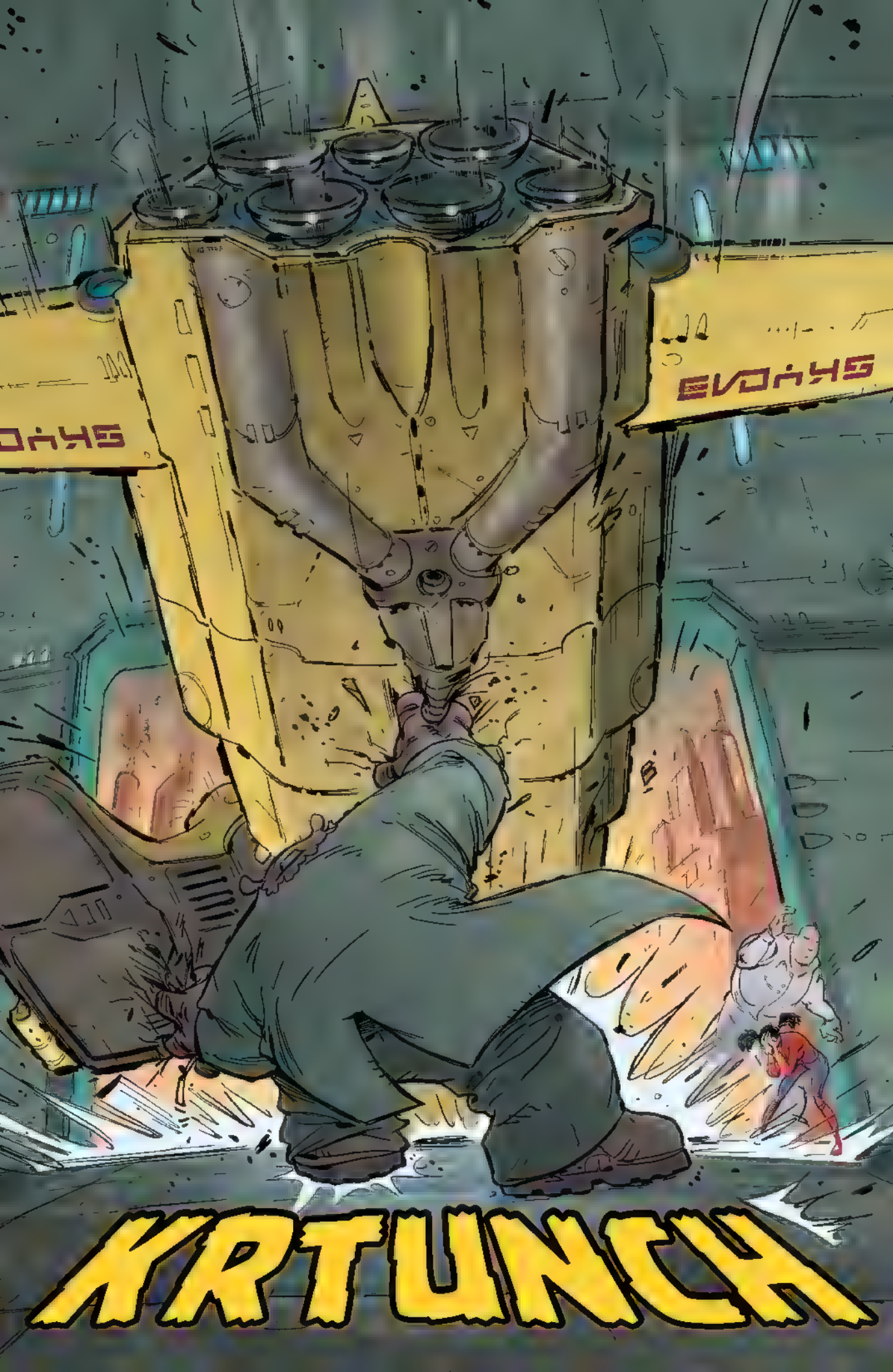
SAMUEL, PERHAPS YOU SHOULD TELL OBADIAH ABOUT OUR VISITORS?*
VISITORS?
YES... THERE WAS A GIRL FROM THE INFORMATION AGENCY HERE WHEN THE PACKAGE WAS DELIVERED.
*Vanity Case and Shim — See ELEPHANTMEN #23
THE AGENCY?
SHE WAS AS SURPRISED AS WE WERE WHEN THE PACKAGE WAS OPENED.
BUT THERE WAS ALSO A MAN. A REPORTER PERHAPS. HE WAS ASKING A LOT OF QUESTIONS.
HNN. PUT... A TAIL ON THE REPORTER.
AND MAKE AN APPOINTMENT AT THE AGENCY.
I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHY ONE OF THEIR AGENTS SAW FIT TO PAY US A VISIT.
YES, A TAIL.
I UNDERSTAND, SIR.
OH YES, SAMUEL PURCHASE IS VERY MUCH ACCUSTOMED TO KEEPING HIS EMPLOYERS' SECRETS.

SOMEWHERE IN L.A.
STATUS?
I'M GETTING A SIGNAL. IMPERIUMITE 7-22 IS ACTIVE.
LOOKS LIKE THE PACKAGE HAS BEEN SUCCESFULLY DELIVERED.
IT IS THE LATTER HALF OF THE TWENTY-THIRD CENTURY. THE MAPPO CORPORATION SPENT INCONCEIVABLE MILLIONS DEVELOPING THEIR ULTIMATE SOLDIERS FOR THE CENTRAL AFRICAN ALLIANCE... BUT THEIR CREATIONS WERE EVENTUALLY DEFEATED. INCARCERATED. REHABILITATED. SOME WOULD SAY EMASCULATED.
THE MAPPO CORPORATION ITSELF WAS DISSOLVED.
BUT NOT ALL MAPPO'S FOUNDERS ACCEPTED THIS.
TOO PROUD TO ACKNOWLEDGE FAILURE, THEY HAVE WAITED.
BROODED.
PLOTTED.
7-22? FLASK.
PERFECT.
SUCH IS THE NATURE OF THOSE WHO HAVE SAVORED OMNIPOTENCE.
NOT EVEN DEFEAT CAN WASH THE TASTE FROM THEIR PALETTE.
RECORD HIS BRAINWAVE ACTIVITY AND SUPPRESS HIS AUTOIMMUNE FUNCTION.
IT MAY HAVE BEEN YEARS SINCE HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM HAS BEEN HOOKED UP TO AN IMPERIUMITE, BUT WE CAN HELP HIM... RE-ADJUST.
"EVENTUALLY HE WON'T EVEN REMEMBER HIS REHABILITATION!"

REMEMBER? ELEPHANTS NEVER FORGET.
KRTAK
NOT UNLESS MAPPO WANTED HIM TO FORGET.
EBONY, PLEASE... STOP THIS...
I'M SORRY, MIKI... I THINK THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO STOP THIS...
WRAMM
IT'S THAT THING ON HIS NECK. IT MUST BE. IT'S DRIVING HIM CRAZY.
OH NO.. OHMIGOSH! HIP.. EBONY, PLEASE...
SOMEONE HAS TO GET THAT THING OFF HIM!


AFTER THE WAR, THE U.N ISSUED A MANDATE THAT REQUIRED COUNTRIES HOSTING TRANSGENICS TO SURGICALLY REMOVE IMPERIUMITES FROM ALL SURVIVING ELEPHANTMEN.
COST TO THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER?
2.5 MILLION DOLLARS FOR EACH OPERATION.
100 MILLION DOLLARS LATER, THE U.S SENATE MODIFIED THEIR COMPLIANCE TO THE MANDATE. IMPERIUMITES WERE DEACTIVATED RATHER THAN REMOVED, SAVING THE U.S TAXPAYER ANOTHER 400 MILLION DOLLARS. OR, RATHER SAVING THE U.S GOVERNMENT 400 MILLION DOLLARS.
EBONY HEE'S IMPERIUMITE REMAINED INTACT.
LESS THAN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AGO, A MAPPO SLEEPER CELL SUCCESSFULLY REACTIVATED EBONY.*
HE HAS NO MEMORY OF THE EVENT...
WHUD
HIP FLASK WILL NOT BE SO LUCKY.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #21
NO! NONONO NONO!

HIP... JUST... LISTEN...
PLEASE... LISTEN TO MY VOICE...
THIS IS NOT THE BATTLEFIELD... MAPPO DON'T CONTROL US HERE...
350-7Z
KRNNK
HIP FLASK WILL REMEMBER EVERYTHING.
HIP... DON'T...
WE'RE FREE NOW.
WHETHER HE WANTS TO OR NOT...
THE WAR IS OVER, MY FR.END.


KRTUNCH

HUNNH?
THIS IS TINY.
TINY HAS BEEN IN LOVE WITH MIKI SINCE THE FIRST DAY HE LAID EYES ON HER.
BUT HE'S NEVER BEEN ABLE TO TELL HER.
HE KNOWS NOW THAT HE CAN NEVER TELL HER.
BECAUSE HE KNOWS NOW THAT MIKI LOVES ANOTHER...
AND SOMEONE HAS TO GET THAT THING OFF HIM...
TINY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
EBONY...?
HON NIN MYO...
THAT'S WHAT SENSEI AT THE SUSHI STAND IS ALWAYS TELLING HIM... LIVE IN THE MOMENT.
HNH?
LIVE... AND LET LIVE.
UH
GRAHHK!

TINY!
TINY, OHMIGOSH, TINY, NO!
FLPTKT
PLTUKT
KRTKT
SHTKT
KRTUNCH
BITE ME!
WHAT -- WHAT HAPPENED...?
WHAT HAPPENED?! YOU HAPPENED!
BREATHE, TINY... PLEASE, BREATHE!

OH, HELL...
WHAT...?
MIKI?
MIKI... SWEETHEART... ARE YOU -- ARE YOU OKAY?!
I AM NOT YOUR SWEETHEART!
YOU AND EBONY HAVE BROUGHT ME NOTHING BUT TROUBLE!
JUST STAY AWAY FROM ME!
...
I THINK YOU TWO APES HAD BETTER GET YOUR LEATHER FINISHED BUTTS OUT OF HERE.
I SAW WHAT HAPPENED. BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT NOTHING WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF THE POWERS THAT BE HAD GOT R'D OF YOUR LOT AFTER THE WAR.
BUT MAYBE NOW THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES.
MAYBE NOW, WHEN THIS GETS OUT--
IT WON'T
IT WON'T GET OUT.

THERE WILL BE A COVER UP. AS THERE ALWAYS IS.
HAVEN'T YOU BOYS FIGURED IT OUT YET?
THE GOVERNMENTS DON'T KEEP YOU AROUND OUT OF THE KINDNESS OF THEIR HEARTS.
THEY KEEP YOU AROUND BECAUSE THEY REALIZE THAT THEY MIGHT NEED YOU.
YOU'RE THE PERFECT SOLDIERS.
"HUMAN BEINGS ARE, AFTER ALL, EXPENDABLE."
"SO CLUMSY. SO VULNERABLE. SO FULL OF QUESTIONS."
BUT NOT THE ELEPHANTMEN. YOU WERE CREATED FOR ONE SIMPLE PURPOSE. TO KILL HUMAN BEINGS.
MY KIND WERE CREATED FOR ANOTHER EQUALLY SIMPLE PURPOSE.
TO REMIND YOU OF YOURS.
MISS ON ACCOMPLISHED.

KRTANCH

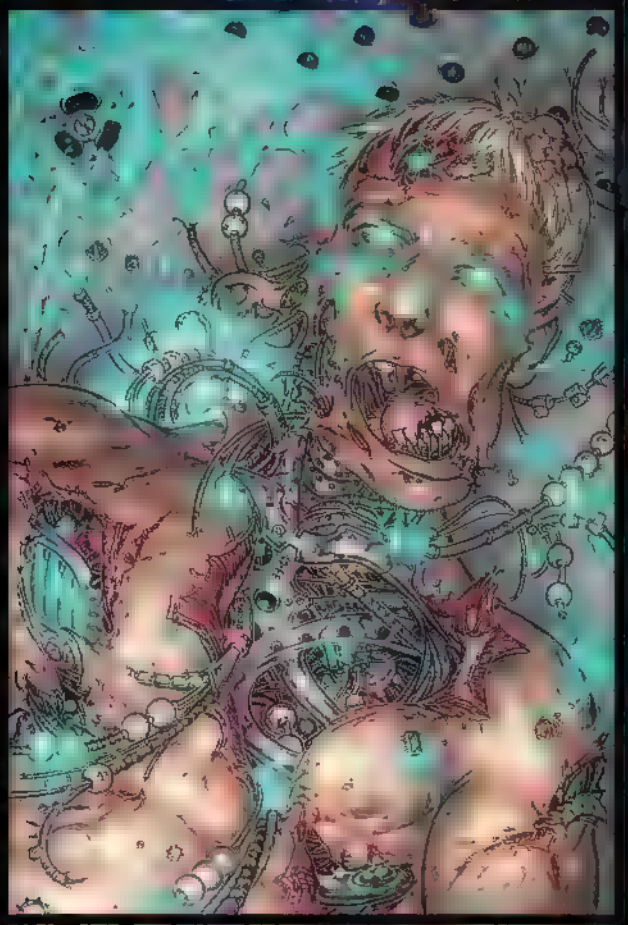
EPILOGUE
SIMM-3, WE ARE AT OLYMPIC AND COURT, WHERE ARE YOU?
CA$H
SIMM-3, RESPOND.
NJHHH--
SIMM-3, REVEAL YOUR LOCATION. THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR TRAN-
SPOOT
GAH!
SPLUP
DAMMIT! I'VE LOST THE SIGNAL COMPLETELY.
HE CAN'T HAVE GONE FAR, HE CALLED IN JUST FIFTEEN MINUTES AGO.
MAYBE HE HAD TO HIDE OUT SOMEWHERE.

By Starkings & Chris Burnham · Colors by Gregory Wright

PENNY SON
SEE -- THERE HE IS...
HUH?
GACK
THWOKT
OH SH!T, NO -- LOOK -- YOU'RE DAMAGED,* WE CAN...
AHGK
SHMPT
*Simm was "TAILED" by The Silencer last issue.
DAMAGED...
RESET . MISSION PARAMETERS.
SEARCHING..

VANITY...
PAWN
NIGHTTIME. MYSTERY CITY.

NEXT ISSUE:



THE BIG PICTURE

DANGEROUS LIAISONS
ELEPHANTMEN
312 PAGE HARDCOVER • ISSUES #16-23 • APRIL 2010

HELLBOY

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VOLUME 01

WOUNDED ANIMALS

STARKINGS · MORITAT · LADRÖNN · ROSHELL · COOK

WITCHBLADE

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VOLUME 02

FATAL DISEASES

STARKINGS • MORITAT • CHURCHILL • ROSHELL • COOK

ELEMENTAL
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03
DANGEROUS LIAISONS
STARKINGS · MORITAT · CHURCHLAND · ROSHELL · COOK

QUESTIONABLE THINGS

TWO OF SEVEN

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Gabriel BAUTISTA
Dougie BRAITHWAITE
Steve BUCCELLATO
Chris BURNHAM
Jon CHURCHILL
Marian CHURCHLAND
Joe COOK
Leah ERSKINE
Dave GIBBONS
Brandon GRAHAM
Paul GRIST
Pia GUERRA
David HINE
Shaky KANE
Aaron KUDER
LADRÖNN
Ian MCDAID
Chris MEDELLIN
MORITAT
Ulises PORTALIO
Duncan ROULEAU
Jim SALE
Dave SCIOLI
Ryan STEEN
Andre SZYMANOWICZ
Raul TREVIÑO
Sheldon VELLA

MARINEMAN

APR 2011

ACTIVE MAGE
COMICRAFT SINCE 1992
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President & First Tiger
JOHN "JG" ROSHELL
Secret Weapon
SANTIAGO PEREZ
Wrangler
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GRUENWALD

HE IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INFORMATION AGENCY, THE EMPLOYERS OF HIP FLASK AND EBON HIDE. HOWEVER, HIS HISTORY WITH THE ELEPHANTMEN IS MUCH LONGER AND CONVOLUTED THAN MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES MIGHT EXPECT.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
MARK GRUENWALD
(1959 - 1996)
"NO, MARK, I OWE YOU!"

www.hipflash.com/elephantmen
e-mail your letters (and chocolate) to RICHARD@HIPFLASK.COM

ARTWORK BY MÖRITAT

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN HANK GRUENWALD WOULD KISS HIS WIFE EVERY NIGHT BEFORE SHE WENT TO SLEEP.
HE WOULD HUG HER GENTLY AND WHISPER "I LOVE YOU," SOFTLY IN HER EAR.
BUT THAT WAS SUCH A LONG TIME AGO NOW.
THAT WAS BEFORE THE LATE NIGHTS AT THE INFORMATION AGENCY.
BEFORE THE FIGHTING AND THE MISCARRIAGE.
DESERT BREEZES
BEFORE THE ELEPHANTMEN.
THE PROBLEM WAS, JAN COULDN'T SEE THE WORLD THE WAY HANK SAW IT.
THE WAY HE HAD TO SEE IT.
SHE DIDN'T HAVE THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE.
SHE COULDN'T SEE THE BIG PICTURE.
TSALE 2010

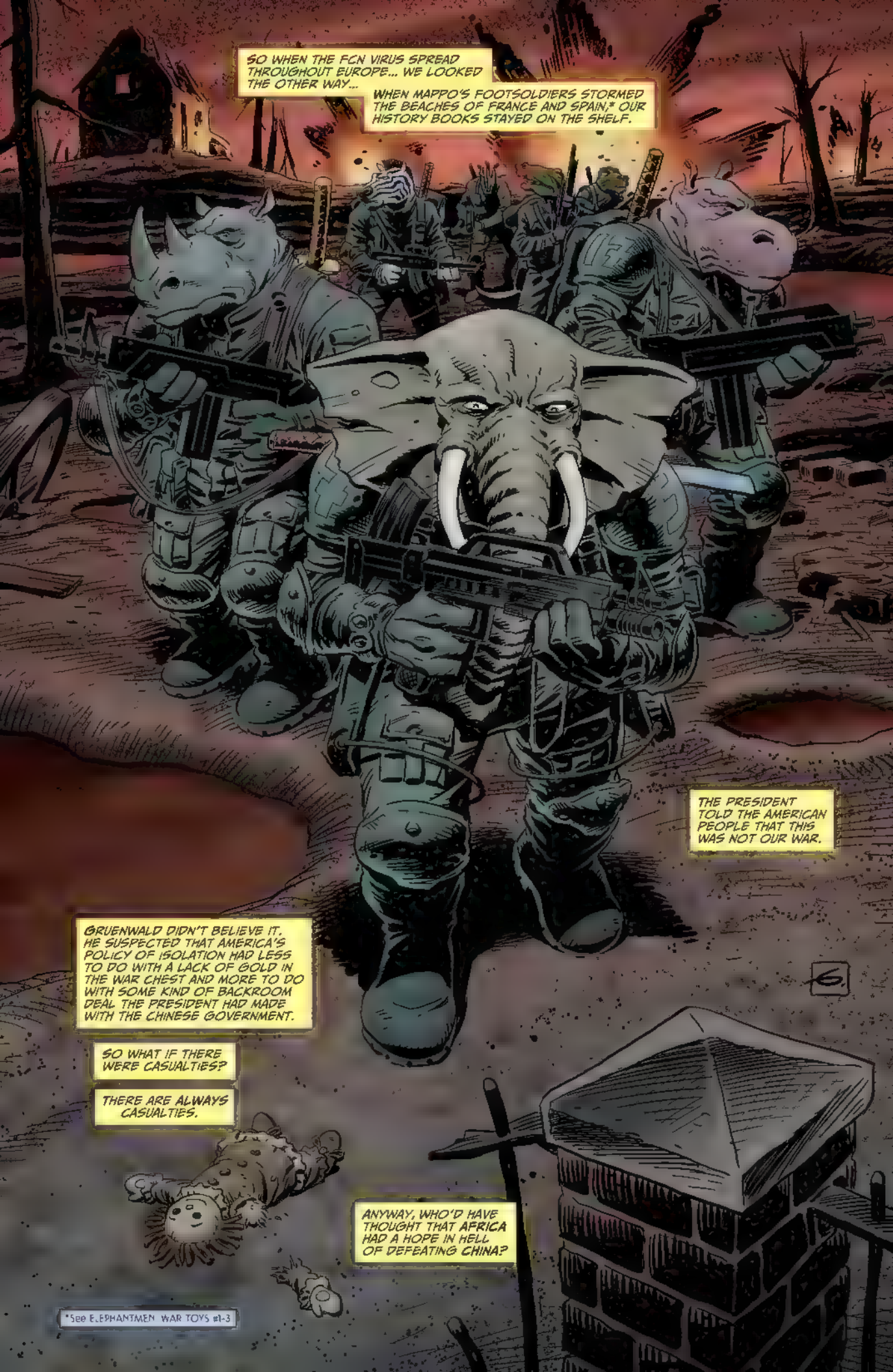
Story by Richard Starkings, Colors by Gregory Wright

The BIG PICTURE
THE FACT OF THE MATTER WAS THAT THE ELEPHANTMEN HAD CHANGED THE WORLD... AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO.
GRUENWALD KNEW THIS; THE HIGHER UPS IN THE GOVERNMENT KNEW IT, BUT IT OFTEN SEEMED LIKE THE AVERAGE JOE IN THE STREET WAS IN A KIND OF DENIAL.
THE PUBLIC THOUGHT THE WAR HAD LONG SINCE ENDED, AND MOST REGARDED THE ELEPHANTMEN WITH THE KIND OF CURIOSITY USUALLY RESERVED FOR MEDIA CELEBRITIES OR FOREIGN ROYALTY. SOME TREATED THEM WITH SUSPICION OR CONTEMPT.
JAN HAD NOTHING BUT SCORN FOR THEM.
SHE REGARDED HER HUSBAND'S CONCERN FOR TRANSGENICS AS NOTHING SHORT OF PERVERSE, BORDERING ON FANATICISM.
SHE WAS JEALOUS, OF COURSE. SHE OFTEN TOLD HIM THAT HE SPENT MORE TIME WITH "THOSE MONSTERS," THAN HE SPENT WITH HER.
SOMETIMES HE THOUGHT SHE MIGHT WELL BE RIGHT...
WAS THERE EVER A TIME WHEN HE WASN'T INVOLVED WITH THE ELEPHANTMEN?
SANTA MONICA 2259

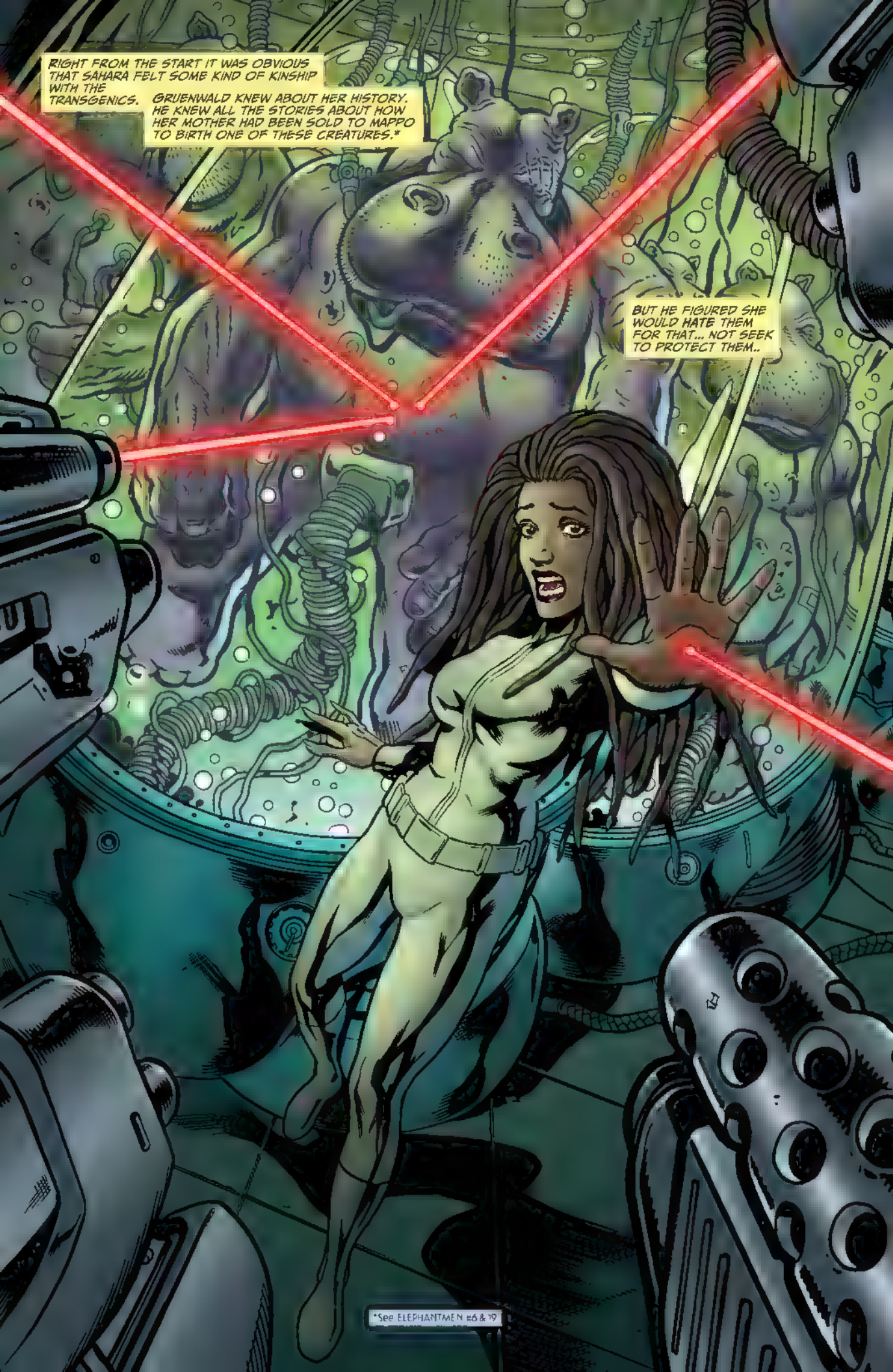
WELL, THERE WAS ONE THING GRUENWALD KNEW FOR SURE; THE WAR WAS FAR FROM OVER.
THE ELEPHANTMEN MIGHT HAVE BEEN DEFEATED AND REHABILITATED BUT THAT DIDN'T MEAN THAT HOSTILITIES BETWEEN THE "GREAT" NATIONS OF THE WORLD HAD CEASED.
INNOCENT PEOPLE WERE STILL BEING TARGETTED.
THE VIRUS THAT STARTED THE SINO-AFRO WAR OVER EUROPE MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONTAINED, BUT IT WAS STILL DEADLY.
AND TWO WEEKS AGO SOMEONE HAD SEEN FIT TO DROP A METEOR FULL OF THE STUFF ON THE BEACH IN SANTA MONICA.*
MORE THAN SIX HUNDRED TOURISTS AND BEACH BUMS HAD LOST THEIR LIVES.
WOMEN, CHILDREN, THE YOUNG AND THE OLD... NO ONE EXPOSED WAS SPARED.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #13-15

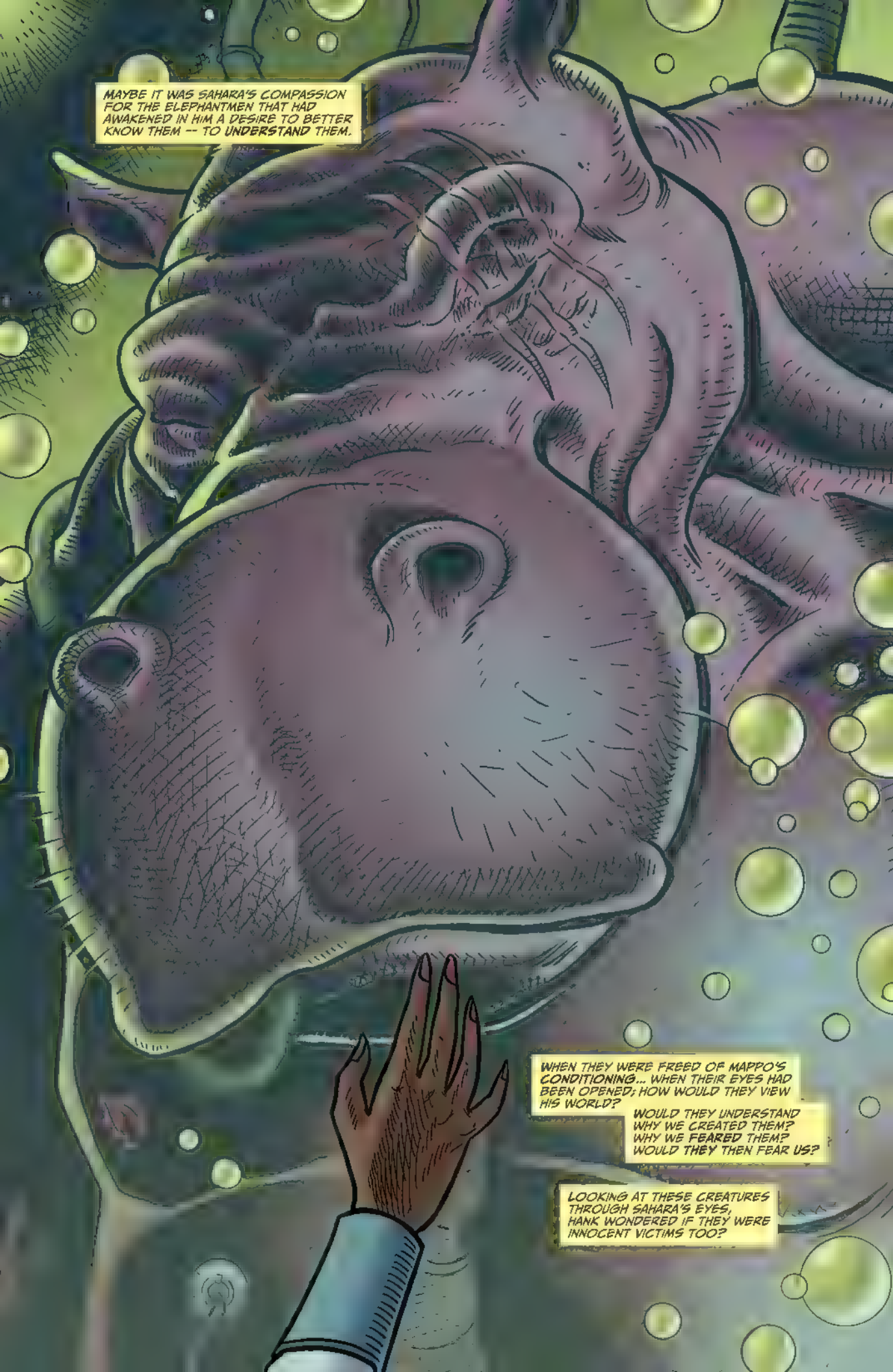
THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THIS ATROCITY...?
COVER IT UP.
ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE STILL REMEMBERED WHAT THEIR FAMILIES HAD EXPERIENCED DURING "THE CENTURY OF BLOODSHED..."
AMERICA SIMPLY COULDN'T AFFORD ANOTHER WAR...
AS LONG AS FOREIGN POWERS STAYED OFF AMERICAN SOIL, WE LOOKED THE OTHER WAY.
AGAIN.
SO WHAT IF THERE WERE CASUALTIES?
THERE ARE ALWAYS CASUALTIES.
PEOPLE LOSE THEIR LIVES JUST CROSSING THE STREET, HANK... BABIES DIE IN THEIR SLEEP... THAT'S WHAT HE WAS TOLD.
OH, HE WAS ASSURED THAT QUESTIONS WERE ASKED -- AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL... BUT THERE WOULD BE NO RETALIATION.
IT DIDN'T SEEM RIGHT.
HADN'T WE LEARNED ANYTHING?

WHAT IF THE U.S GOVERNMENT HADN'T CHANGED ITS POSITION ON CLONING IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE 23RD CENTURY?
WHERE WOULD NIKKEN HAVE BEEN THEN...?
WHAT WOULD HAVE BECOME OF MAPPO?
WITHOUT NIKKEN'S ENDANGERED SPECIES RESTORATION PROGRAM AT THE ESALIN INSTITUTE, THERE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN THE MONEY TO FUND MAPPO'S TRANSGENICS RESEARCH .
WITHOUT THAT RESEARCH, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO HUMAN/ANIMAL HYBRIDS TO FIGHT THE CENTRAL AFRICAN ALLIANCE'S WAR WITH CHINA.
PERHAPS NO ELEPHANTMEN AT ALL.
JAN WOULD HAVE LIKED THAT.
BUT NIKKEN GOT HIS GRANT, AND WHEN HIS TRUE INTENTIONS BECAME CLEAR, THE U.S AUTHORITIES DID NOTHING MORE THAN SEND HIM INTO EXILE. TO AFRICA.
WE KNEW THERE WAS A WAR BREWING IN EURASIA, BUT WE TURNED A BLIND EYE. LET THEM LEARN, THE PRESIDENT SAID...
LET THEM FIGHT IT OUT.


SO WHEN THE FCN VIRUS SPREAD THROUGHOUT EUROPE... WE LOOKED THE OTHER WAY...
WHEN MAPPO'S FOOTSOLDIERS STORMED THE BEACHES OF FRANCE AND SPAIN,* OUR HISTORY BOOKS STAYED ON THE SHELF.
THE PRESIDENT TOLD THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THAT THIS WAS NOT OUR WAR.
GRUENWALD DIDN'T BELIEVE IT. HE SUSPECTED THAT AMERICA'S POLICY OF ISOLATION HAD LESS TO DO WITH A LACK OF GOLD IN THE WAR CHEST AND MORE TO DO WITH SOME KIND OF BACKROOM DEAL THE PRESIDENT HAD MADE WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.
SO WHAT IF THERE WERE CASUALTIES?
THERE ARE ALWAYS CASUALTIES.
ANYWAY, WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT AFRICA HAD A HOPE IN HELL OF DEFEATING CHINA?
6.
*See ELEPHANTMEN WAR TOYS #1-3

SO WHEN CHINA'S DEFEAT SEEMED INEVITABLE, GRUENWALD WASN'T SURPRISED WHEN THE U.S FORCED A RESOLUTION THAT FINALLY ALLOWED THE UNITED NATIONS TO INTERVENE.
HE WAS DRAFTED OF COURSE, BUT HE HAD ALREADY DECIDED THAT HE WOULD SIGN UP. THE STORIES HE'D HEARD FROM THE FRONT HAD BOTH SICKENED AND INTRIGUED HIM...
HE WANTED TO SEE THE ELEPHANTMEN FOR HIMSELF.
AND HE GOT HIS WISH.
PERHAPS GAINING CONFIDENCE FROM THE PROMISE OF SUPPORT FROM THE WEST, THE CHINESE ARMY HAD PREVAILED IN SIBERIA AND MAPPO'S FORCES WERE IN RETREAT.
GRUENWALD WAS SENT WITH U.N FORCES TO MAPPO HEADQUARTERS IN AFRICA... THERE, MEMBERS OF THE C.A.A'S ADVANCE GUARD WERE RECOVERING FROM INJURIES BEFORE BEING SENT BACK INTO BATTLE.
THAT WAS WHERE HE FIRST MET SAHARA.


RIGHT FROM THE START IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT SAHARA FELT SOME KIND OF KINSHIP WITH THE TRANSGENICS.
GRUENWALD KNEW ABOUT HER HISTORY. HE KNEW ALL THE STORIES ABOUT HOW HER MOTHER HAD BEEN SOLD TO MAPPO TO BIRTH ONE OF THESE CREATURES.*
BUT HE FIGURED SHE WOULD HATE THEM FOR THAT... NOT SEEK TO PROTECT THEM..
*See ELEPHANTMEN #6 & 19


MAYBE IT WAS SAHARA'S COMPASSION FOR THE ELEPHANTMEN THAT HAD AWAKENED IN HIM A DESIRE TO BETTER KNOW THEM -- TO UNDERSTAND THEM.
WHEN THEY WERE FREED OF MAPPO'S CONDITIONING... WHEN THEIR EYES HAD BEEN OPENED; HOW WOULD THEY VIEW HIS WORLD?
WOULD THEY UNDERSTAND WHY WE CREATED THEM? WHY WE FEARED THEM? WOULD THEY THEN FEAR US?
LOOKING AT THESE CREATURES THROUGH SAHARA'S EYES, HANK WONDERED IF THEY WERE INNOCENT VICTIMS TOO?

PERHAPS THEY WERE JUST SOLDIERS MUCH LIKE HIMSELF.
FOLLOWING ORDERS.
BELIEVING ALL THE BULLSHIT.
JUST TRYING TO STAY ALIVE.
TRYING NOT TO BECOME ANOTHER CASUALTY.

THINGS HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH SINCE THOSE DAYS... HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN NOW? TWENTY YEARS...?
GRUENWALD IS STILL FOLLOWING ORDERS.
BUT THIS GUY, OBADIAH HORN, THINKS HE CAN GIVE THEM.
IF YOU WANT PROOF THAT ELEPHANTMEN ARE JUST AS HUMAN AS WE ARE, LOOK NO FURTHER.
EVERY HUMAN VICE AND VIRTUE BOTTLED UP IN AN EIGHT FOOT TALL, FOUR FOOT WIDE CONTAINER.
ARROGANT, BUT SELF-MOTIVATED. RICH, YET GENEROUS TO CHARITIES. POWERFUL, BUT APPARENTLY BENEVOLENT.
UNLESS SOMETHING PISSES HIM OFF...
OH YEAH, THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME HORN AND HIS CRONY HAVE LODGED A COMPLAINT AGAINST THE AGENCY.
THE ONLY THING THAT SURPRISES GRUENWALD THIS TIME IS THE FACT THAT HORN CAME OVER TO THE AGENCY IN PERSON.
USUALLY IT'S JUST HIS WEASEL, PURCHASE.
MAYBE THIS TIME THEY HAVE A LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCE?

SO GRUENWALD LISTENS TO THE COMPLAINT.
HE LISTENS AS HORN TALKS ABOUT AGENT VANITY CASE AND HER MALE COMPANION, A REPORTER PERHAPS?*
GRUENWALD TURNS AWAY TO HIDE HIS EMBARRASSMENT, ALL THE TIME STILL AWARE OF HORN'S GAZE BURNING INTO THE BACK OF HIS NECK.
SOMEONE GOT TO HIM. SOMEONE SCARED HIM... HOW ABOUT THAT?
GRUENWALD SHUDDERS WHEN HORN SPEAKS OF TUSK...
HE ISN'T SURPRISED THAT TUSK'S GRAVE WAS DESECRATED. THIS KIND OF THING HAPPENED BEFORE.
BUT HORN IS RIGHT... SAHARA SHOULD NEVER HAVE HAD TO SEE HIS... REMAINS.
AT LEAST, NOT THE SAHARA HE GOT TO KNOW AT THE U.N REHAB FACILITIES.
SOMETIMES GRUENWALD WONDERS IF THAT GIRL EXISTS ANY MORE.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #23

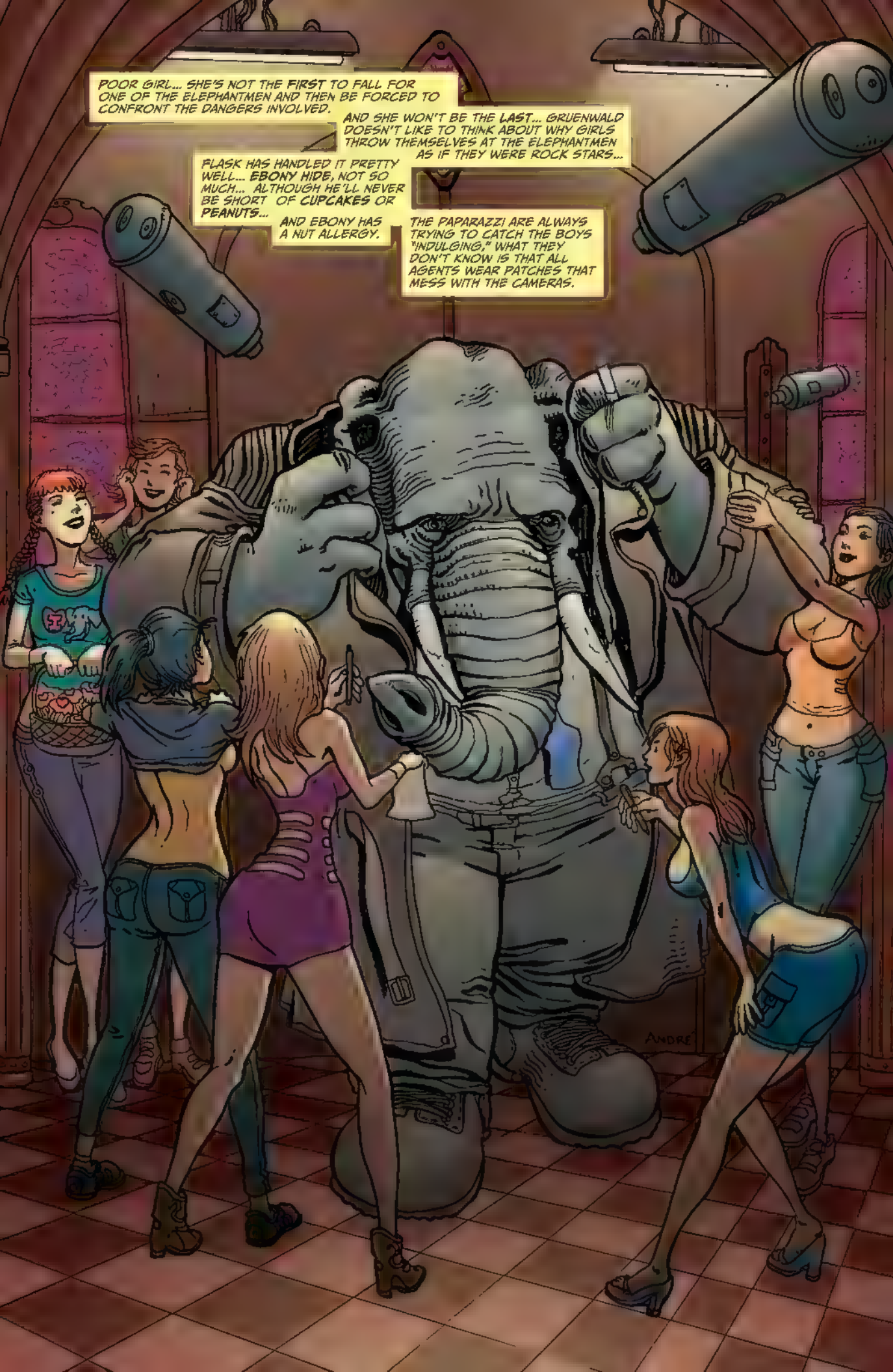
SAHARA...
IS SHE REALLY IN LOVE WITH OBADIAH HORN?
AND WHAT HAS HE TURNED HER INTO?
DESERT BREEZES
ALTHOUGH SHE CONTINUES TO WORK ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS AS A GOODWILL AMBASSADOR, GRUENWALD CAN'T REALLY REMEMBER THE LAST TIME HE SAW HER IN THE FLESH...
OF COURSE HE SAW HER FACE ON THE STREET THIS MORNING, LOOKING DOWN AT HIM FROM A BILLBOARD.
IS THAT ALL SHE IS NOW? SOME KIND OF SUPERMODEL?
WELL, MAYBE SHE'S HAPPY. AND, YOU KNOW WHAT? SHE DESERVES TO BE HAPPY.
GODDAMMIT, SHE SUFFERED ENOUGH, DIDN'T SHE?
IT'S LIKE HE TELLS JAN ALL THE TIME... YOU CAN'T JUDGE BY APPEARANCES ALONE; YOU HAVE TO THINK OF THE BIG PICTURE.
2010

BUT THEN, WHAT ABOUT TUSK...?
DIDN'T HE SUFFER ENOUGH? THEY'D KEPT HIM LOCKED IN A PADDED CELL FOR TWENTY YEARS...
AND WHEN HE FINALLY BROKE OUT? HE WAS SHOT LIKE A DOG BY L.A.P.D'S FINEST.
AND AS IF THAT WASN'T ENOUGH OF AN INDIGNITY, HIS SEVERED HEAD IS DELIVERED TO THE ONE PERSON THAT EVER SHOWED HIM KINDNESS.*
WHAT BIZARRE TWIST OF FATE DOES THIS TO THESE POOR CREATURES?
WHAT IS IT THAT PLACED ONE ELEPHANTMAN IN A SOLITARY CONFINEMENT CELL IN LOS ANGELES...
AND ANOTHER IN AN IVORY TOWER, AS RICH AS CROESUS, JUST A FEW MILES AWAY?
MIND YOU, THINGS COULD BE WORSE...
*See ELEPHANTMEN #4, 15, 19 & 23

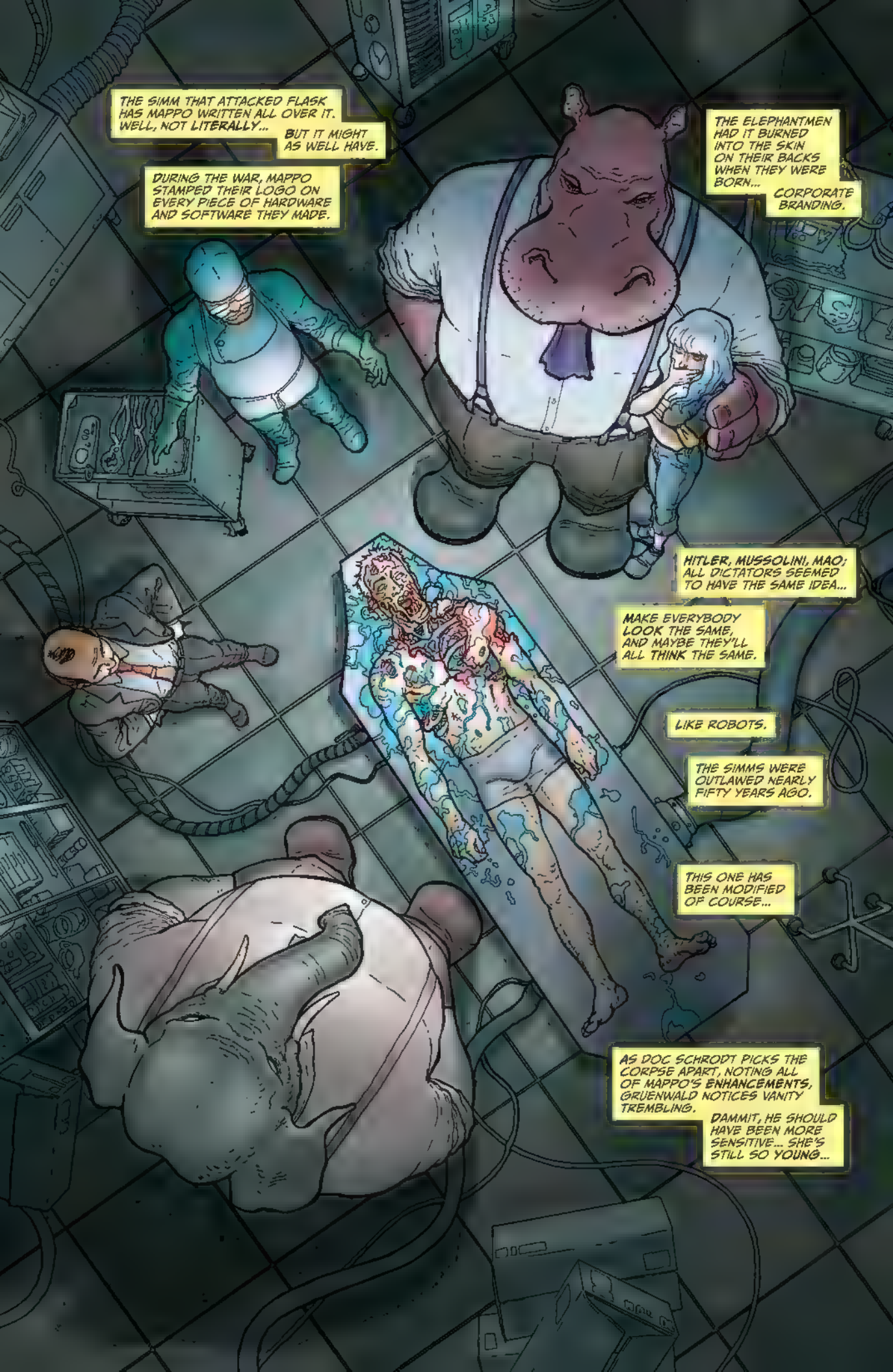
...GRUENWALD HAD HEARD OF AN ELEPHANTMAN IN INDIA WHO WAS BEING WORSHIPPED AS A GOD.
HIS MESSAGE? "LOVE, LIGHT AND PEACE..."
HOW IRONIC... AND HOW HUMAN... DEPENDING ON WHAT WE BELIEVE WE CAN TRANSFORM OUR FORMER ENEMIES INTO GODS...

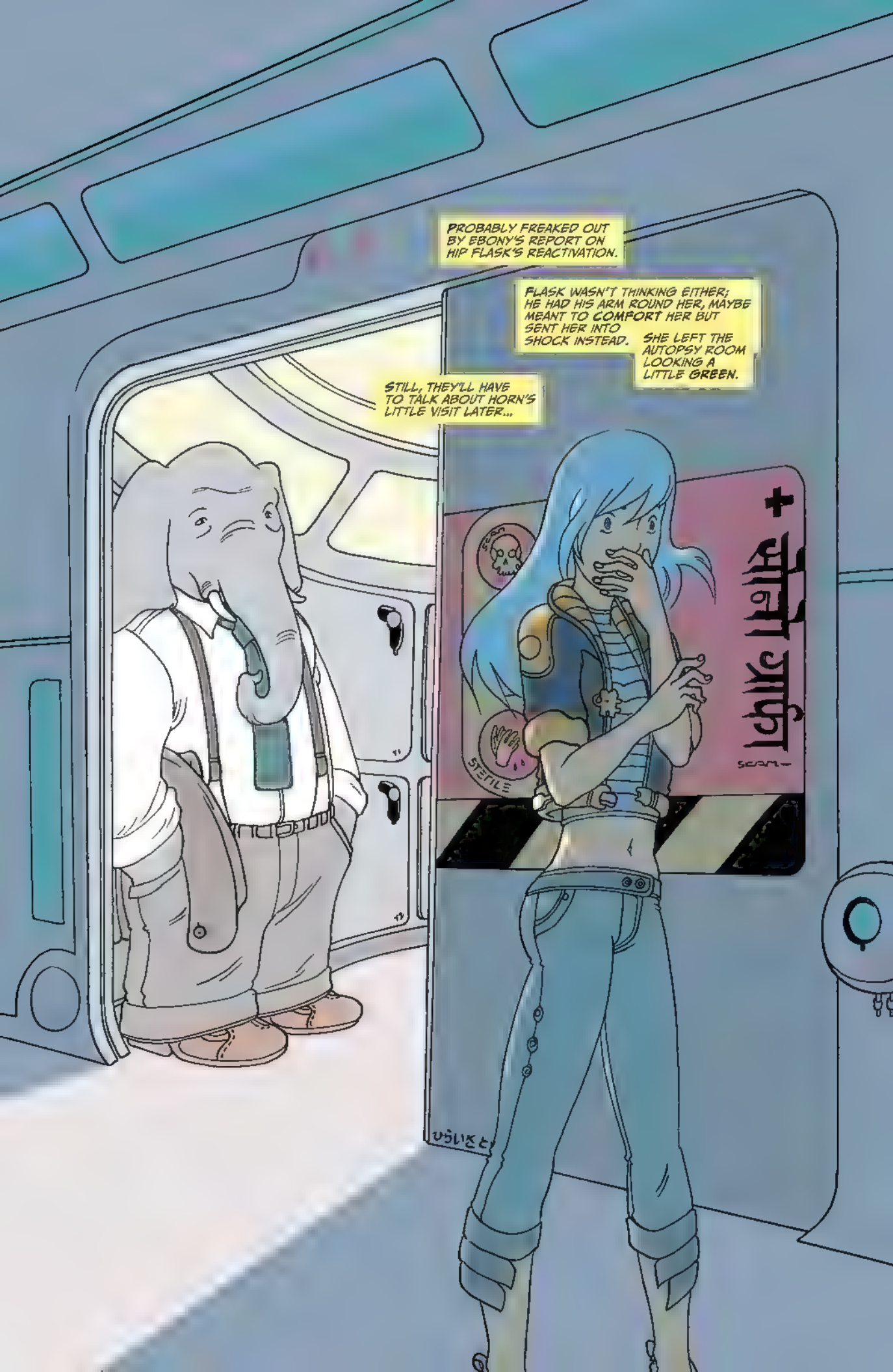
...OR DEMONS...
GRUENWALD HAS KNOWN HIERONYMOUS "HIP" FLASK FOR THE BEST PART OF TWENTY YEARS, AND THEY HAVE WORKED TOGETHER FOR NEARLY TEN...
HE KNOWS FLASK TO BE A RESPONSIBLE AGENT, AND ONE OF THE SMARTEST TRANSGENICS HE'S EVER ENCOUNTERED.
ONCE, WITHOUT THINKING, HE RECOMMENDED FLASK TO A COLLEAGUE AS "A GOOD MAN."
AND NOW SOMEONE SENDS A ROBOT OUT TO A TAXI RANK AND SUDDENLY FLASK IS A LIVING WEAPON AGAIN.*
SUDDENLY IT'S CLEAR TO ALL INVOLVED THAT THE WAR WILL NEVER BE OVER WHILE THERE'S EVEN ONE ELEPHANTMAN ALIVE...
THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THIS DEVELOPMENT?
COVER IT UP.
DON'T LET THE PUBLIC THINK THAT THE ELEPHANTMEN AREN'T UNDER CONTROL...
SO WHAT IF THERE WERE CASUALTIES?
*See ELEPHANTMEN #23 & 24

THERE ARE ALWAYS CASUALTIES.
AND IT'S ALWAYS THE INNOCENTS THAT SUFFER.
LIKE MIKI, THE CAB DRIVER, AND HER COLLEAGUE.
FLASK THREW THE MECHANIC, TINY, THROUGH THE AIR, LEAVING HIM IN A COMA.
IF GRUENWALD IS NOT MISTAKEN, MIKI HAD SOMETHING OF A SOFT SPOT FOR FLASK...
WHAT IS SHE THINKING NOW?


POOR GIRL... SHE'S NOT THE FIRST TO FALL FOR ONE OF THE ELEPHANTMEN AND THEN BE FORCED TO CONFRONT THE DANGERS INVOLVED.
AND SHE WON'T BE THE LAST... GRUENWALD DOESN'T LIKE TO THINK ABOUT WHY GIRLS THROW THEMSELVES AT THE ELEPHANTMEN AS IF THEY WERE ROCK STARS...
FLASK HAS HANDLED IT PRETTY WELL... EBONY HIDE, NOT SO MUCH... ALTHOUGH HE'LL NEVER BE SHORT OF CUPCAKES OR PEANUTS...
AND EBONY HAS A NUT ALLERGY.
THE PAPARAZZI ARE ALWAYS TRYING TO CATCH THE BOYS "INDULGING," WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW IS THAT ALL AGENTS WEAR PATCHES THAT MESS WITH THE CAMERAS.
ANDRE

GRUENWALD WONDERS WHAT NIKKEN THINKS OF THE LIVES HIS "CHILDREN" LEAD NOW.
DID HE THINK OF HIMSELF AS SOME KIND OF GOD?
NIKKEN, CREATOR OF THE ELEPHANTMEN; LORD AND MASTER.
DOES HE SUFFER IN THAT PRISON OUT THERE IN THE MOJAVE DESERT THE WAY TUSK SUFFERED?
PROBABLY NOT.
HE'S PROBABLY DINING ON PICKLED QUAILS' EGGS AND FILET MIGNON, SERVED ON SILVER PLATTERS BY SECRET SERVICEMEN.
CELEBRITY INTELLECTUALS ARE NEVER REALLY PUNISHED, THEY'RE PAMPERED AND ENVIED.
EVEN THE NUTJOBS.
GRUENWALD HOPES THEY THREW AWAY THE KEY.

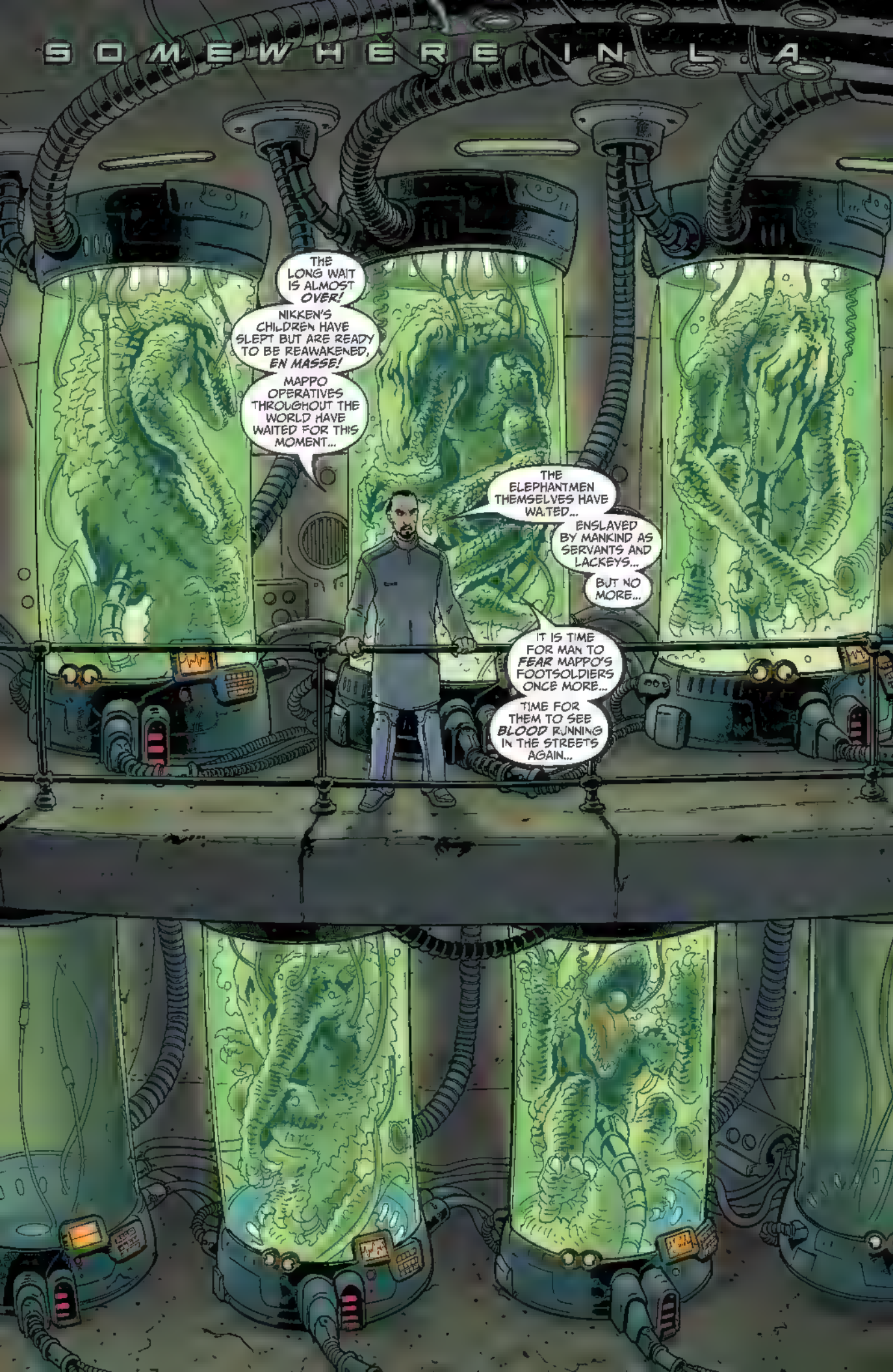

THE SIMM THAT ATTACKED FLASK HAS MAPPO WRITTEN ALL OVER IT. WELL, NOT LITERALLY...
BUT IT MIGHT AS WELL HAVE.
DURING THE WAR, MAPPO STAMPED THEIR LOGO ON EVERY PIECE OF HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE THEY MADE.
THE ELEPHANTMEN HAD IT BURNED INTO THE SKIN ON THEIR BACKS WHEN THEY WERE BORN...
CORPORATE BRANDING.
HITLER, MUSSOLINI, MAO; ALL DICTATORS SEEMED TO HAVE THE SAME IDEA...
MAKE EVERYBODY LOOK THE SAME, AND MAYBE THEY'LL ALL THINK THE SAME.
LIKE ROBOTS.
THE SIMMS WERE OUTLAWED NEARLY FIFTY YEARS AGO.
THIS ONE HAS BEEN MODIFIED OF COURSE...
AS DOC SCHRODT PICKS THE CORPSE APART, NOTING ALL OF MAPPO'S ENHANCEMENTS, GRUENWALD NOTICES VANITY TREMBLING.
DAMMIT, HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE SENSITIVE... SHE'S STILL SO YOUNG...


PROBABLY FREAKED OUT BY EBONY'S REPORT ON HIP FLASK'S REACTIVATION.
FLASK WASN'T THINKING EITHER; HE HAD HIS ARM ROUND HER, MAYBE MEANT TO COMFORT HER BUT SENT HER INTO SHOCK INSTEAD.
SHE LEFT THE AUTOPSY ROOM LOOKING A LITTLE GREEN.
STILL, THEY'LL HAVE TO TALK ABOUT HORN'S LITTLE VISIT LATER...
STERILE

IT'S FUNNY, OVER THE YEARS, GRUENWALD HAS FOUND IT PROGRESSIVELY EASIER TO TALK TO THE TRANSGENICS THAN TO TALK TO "REAL" HUMAN BEINGS.
THAT'S PROBABLY WHY JAN DOESN'T TALK TO HIM MUCH ANY MORE.
HAS HE BEEN TRYING TOO HARD TO SEE THINGS FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE? SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME FIGURING OUT WHAT MAKES THESE ELEPHANTMEN TICK... TRYING TO PROTECT THEM FROM EACH OTHER; FROM THEMSELVES?
AND TO WHAT END?
HAS HE BEEN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THEM, OR HAS HE BEEN SEEKING THEIR FORGIVENESS?
MAYBE HE'S JUST ANOTHER BLEEDING HEART LIBERAL GIVEN THE ILLUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY SO THAT THE PEOPLE WHO CAN REALLY AFFECT THE LIVES OF THE TRANSGENICS CAN PLACE THE BLAME ON HIS SHOULDERS AT A LATER DATE?
AND THESE NEW INCIDENTS DON'T HELP HIM ANY. THE INFORMATION AGENCY AND THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT AREN'T WHAT YOU'D CALL BOSOM PALS AT THE BEST OF TIMES, RIGHT...?
AND NOW THEY HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER TO FIGURE OUT IF THERE'S A MAPPO SLEEPER CELL OPERATING IN THE CITY...
AND WHO DO YOU THINK THEY ASSIGNED? ONE OF GRUENWALD'S OLD COLLEAGUES? NO.
TRENCH? THE ZEBRA; HIP AND EBONY'S OLD WAR BUDDY? UH, NO.
HOW ABOUT HIS FORMER PARTNER, THE ONE WITH A CHIP ON HER SHOULDER... THE ONE THAT HATES ELEPHANTMEN...?
WHAT WAS HER NAME...? OH, YEAH...

BLACKTHORNE.
THAT'S ME.
WE HAVE TO TALK!
ANOTHER LATE NIGHT, THEN...
SCIOLI

JAN WILL BE ASLEEP WHEN HE GETS HOME.
THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES WHEN GRUENWALD HAS BEEN SURPRISED TO FIND HER STILL THERE.
SHE STOPPED ASKING QUESTIONS YEARS AGO.
NOT BECAUSE SHE HAD STOPPED... HURTING...
.. BUT BECAUSE HE RAN OUT OF ANSWERS.
IF SHE LEFT HIM .. WELL, IT WOULD BE A RELIEF, WOULDN'T IT?
FROM WHERE HE'S STANDING, THERE'S STILL A WAR ON ..
AND JUST LIKE ANY OTHER WAR...
THERE ARE CASUALTIES.


SOMEWHERE IN L.A.
THE LONG WAIT IS ALMOST OVER!
NIKKEN'S CHILDREN HAVE SLEPT BUT ARE READY TO BE REAWAKENED, EN MASSE!
MAPPO OPERATIVES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD HAVE WAITED FOR THIS MOMENT...
THE ELEPHANTMEN THEMSELVES HAVE WAITED...
ENSLAVED BY MANKIND AS SERVANTS AND LACKEYS...
BUT NO MORE...
IT IS TIME FOR MAN TO FEAR MAPPO'S FOOTSOLDIERS ONCE MORE...
TIME FOR THEM TO SEE BLOOD RUNNING IN THE STREETS AGAIN...

"...AND THIS TIME, THERE WILL BE NO SURRENDER!"

Thanks to Our Artists, in Order of Appearance:

Tim SALE
MORITAT
Gabe BAUTISTA
Duncan ROULEAU
Sheldon VELLA*
Dave GIBBONS
Dougie BRAITHWAITE
Gary ERSKINE
Steve BUCCELLATO
Whilce PORTACIO
Jan CHURCHILL
Shaky KANE*
Raul TREVINO
Boo COOK
Paul GRIST
LADRONN
Marian CHURCHLAND*
Andre SZYMANOWICZ
David HINE
Chris BURNHAM
with Aaron KUDER
Brandon GRAHAM*
Dan MCDAID
Tom SCIOLI
Pia GUERRA
Axel MEDELLIN
Rob STEEN

*FULL COLOUR ART

NEXT ISSUE:

HOUSE

NEW BACK-UP NEXT ISSUE!

ROSHELL
BAUTISTA
SZYMANOWICZ

C<3R

CHARLEY LOVES ROBOTS

1 BOY + 1 BOT = ∞ TROUBLE

ELEPHANTMEN 2010 TOUR

STUMPTOWN
PORTLAND · APR 24-25

BRISTOL EXPO
BRISTOL, UK · MAY 22-23

MCM EXPO
LONDON · MAY 29-30

Just Added!

MARINEMAN

A LOT CAN CHANGE IN THREE DECADES
MARINEMAN FOR INSTANCE, HAS EVOLVED
FROM AN EIGHT YEAR OLD'S FANTASY
INTO AN ADULT'S REALITY!

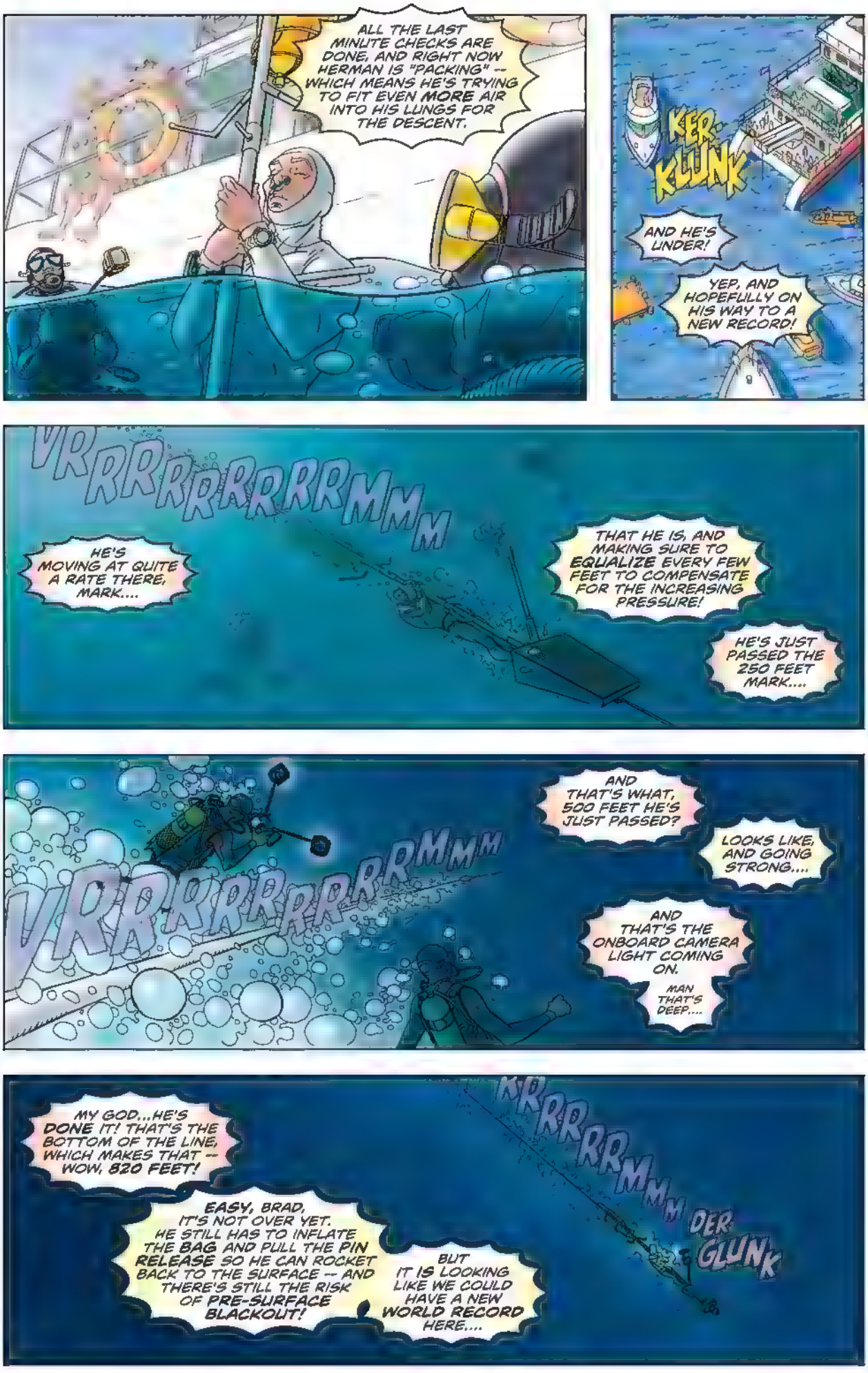
— CREATOR OF THE 'ELEPHANTMEN
AND MY GOOD FRIEND, RICHARD STARKINGS
GENEROUSLY ALLOWED THIS 5 PAGE
MARINEMAN' PREVIEW TO BE SHOWN WITHIN
THE PAGES OF ELEPHANTMEN

SO, THANKS RICH, FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT
AND SUPPORT THANKS TO EVERYONE
READING, AND I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE PREVIEW

THE REST IS YET TO COME

P R O L O G U E

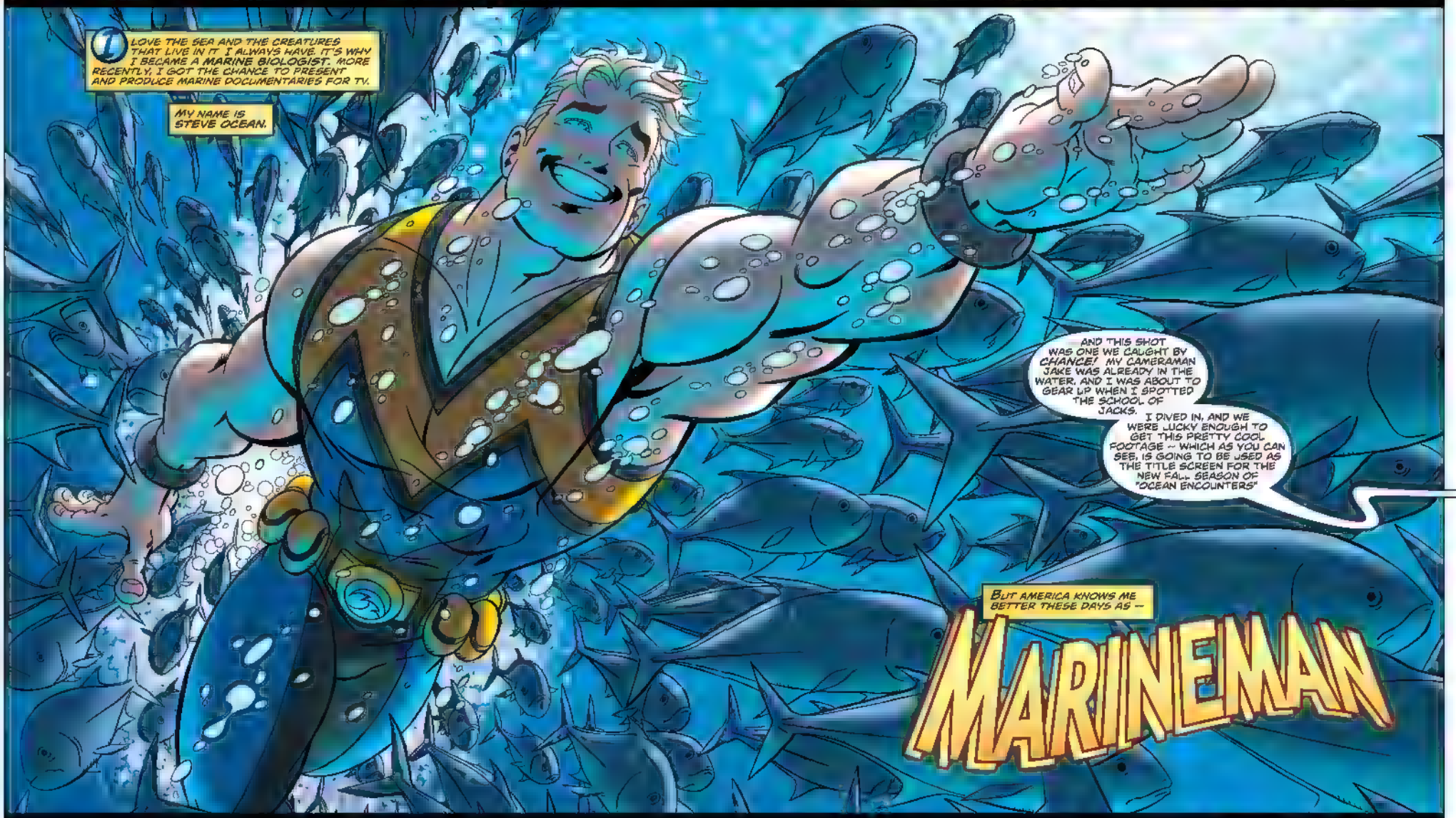
...BROADCASTING LIVE OVER THE WORLD WIDE WEB. HI, I'M BRAD STONE, AND WITH ME HERE I HAVE MARK JOHNSON, THE CURRENT MEN'S RECORD HOLDER IN THE STATIC APNEA DISCIPLINE OF FREE-DIVING. SAY 'HI', MARK.
HI THERE EVERYBODY.
WE'RE HERE OFF THE FLORIDA COAST FOR A WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT IN THE MEN'S NO-LIMITS FREE-DIVING CATEGORY BY HERMAN MERRICK, AND I HAVE TO SAY THE WEATHER HERE IS JUST PERFECT FOR TODAY'S EVENT.
HEY, SURE BRAD, NO PROBLEM. LIKE YOU SAY, WE GOT US SOME AWESOME WEATHER HERE TODAY, AND YOU REALLY COULDN'T WISH FOR ANY BETTER CONDITIONS.
MARK, SINCE I HAVE YOU HERE, WHY DON'T YOU EXPLAIN NO-LIMITS FREE-DIVING TO OUR VIEWERS.
IN REAL SIMPLE TERMS, FREE-DIVING IS DIVING BENEATH THE WATER FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE ON JUST ONE SINGLE BREATH. HUMAN BEINGS HAVE ADAPTED FOR LIFE ON LAND, BUT GUESS WHAT? WE STILL HAVE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS LIKE THOSE OF WHALES AND OTHER MARINE MAMMALS THAT ALLOW US TO KEEP GOING DEEPER AND LONGER.
ANYONE CAN GET INTO FREE-DIVING, IS THAT RIGHT, MARK?
ABSOLUTELY ANYONE, MALE OR FEMALE AND ANY AGE. WE HAVE A NATURAL ABILITY CALLED THE MAMMALIAN DIVE REFLEX WHICH IS A FANCY WAY OF SAYING THAT THE BODY REMEMBERS A TIME WHEN WE SPENT A WHOLE LOT MORE TIME LIVING IN THE WATER, AND AUTOMATICALLY KICKS IN WHEN WE GO BELOW THE WATER'S SURFACE!
SO MARK, YOU'RE THE CURRENT RECORD HOLDER FOR THE STATIC APNEA...
THAT'S RIGHT...
I GUESS YOU CAN HOLD YOUR BREATH A LONG TIME?
15 MINUTES AND 3 SECONDS!
WOW!
BUT THAT'S WITH LIKE NO MOVEMENT, AND AT THE SURFACE. YOU GO DEEP AND IT GETS MORE SERIOUS!
THANKS FOR THAT, MARK. MOUNTED ON THE SLED WILL BE A CAMERA AND FLASHLIGHT SO WE CAN FOLLOW THE ACTION ALL THE WAY. THERE'LL BE SAFETY DIVERS AND UNDERWATER CAMERAMEN, EXCEPT FOR THE VERY BOTTOM OF THE LINE, WHICH IS TOO DEEP FOR THEM TO BE EFFECTIVE.
IF SOMETHING WERE TO GO WRONG AT THAT DEPTH, ONLY THE FREE-DIVER'S EXPERIENCE WOULD REALLY BE ABLE TO HELP HIM -- WHICH SHOWS JUST HOW BRAVE AND DEDICATED THESE GUYS REALLY ARE!
MARK, WHY DON'T YOU TALK US THROUGH WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW...


ALL THE LAST MINUTE CHECKS ARE DONE, AND RIGHT NOW HERMAN IS "PACKING" -- WHICH MEANS HE'S TRYING TO FIT EVEN MORE AIR INTO HIS LUNGS FOR THE DESCENT.
KER-KLUNK
AND HE'S UNDER!
YEP, AND HOPEFULLY ON HIS WAY TO A NEW RECORD!
VRRRRRRRRRRRMMM
HE'S MOVING AT QUITE A RATE THERE, MARK....
THAT HE IS, AND MAKING SURE TO EQUALIZE EVERY FEW FEET TO COMPENSATE FOR THE INCREASING PRESSURE!
HE'S JUST PASSED THE 250 FEET MARK....
VRRRRRRRRRRRMMM
AND THAT'S WHAT, 500 FEET HE'S JUST PASSED?
LOOKS LIKE, AND GOING STRONG....
AND THAT'S THE ONBOARD CAMERA LIGHT COMING ON.
MAN THAT'S DEEP....
MY GOD...HE'S DONE IT! THAT'S THE BOTTOM OF THE LINE, WHICH MAKES THAT -- WOW, 820 FEET!
EASY, BRAD, IT'S NOT OVER YET. HE STILL HAS TO INFLATE THE BAG AND PULL THE PIN RELEASE SO HE CAN ROCKET BACK TO THE SURFACE -- AND THERE'S STILL THE RISK OF PRE-SURFACE BLACKOUT!
BUT IT IS LOOKING LIKE WE COULD HAVE A NEW WORLD RECORD HERE....
KRRRRRRMMM
DER GLUNK

VORMMM
?
WHAT THE HELL? YOU GUYS SEE THAT FLASH?
WHAT WAS IT, A POWER SURGE IN THE FLASHLIGHT?
I... DON'T KNOW, IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS OFF CAMERA!
BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING DOWN THAT DEEP....
I KNOW,, I...OH MY GOD!
OH JEEZ...
...MY GOD, TELL ME THAT DIDN'T JUST HAPPEN.
DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED! LOSE THE FEED, BRAD!
HUH? YEAH, RIGHT!

END PR

OCEAN Encounters


I LOVE THE SEA AND THE CREATURES THAT LIVE IN IT. I ALWAYS HAVE. IT'S WHY I BECAME A MARINE BIOLOGIST. MORE RECENTLY, I GOT THE CHANCE TO PRESENT AND PRODUCE MARINE DOCUMENTARIES FOR TV.
MY NAME IS STEVE OCEAN.
AND THIS SHOT WAS ONE WE CAUGHT BY CHANCE! MY CAMERAMAN JAKE WAS ALREADY IN THE WATER, AND I WAS ABOUT TO GEAR UP WHEN I SPOTTED THE SCHOOL OF JACKS.
I DIVED IN, AND WE WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO GET THIS PRETTY COOL FOOTAGE -- WHICH AS YOU CAN SEE, IS GOING TO BE USED AS THE TITLE SCREEN FOR THE NEW FALL SEASON OF "OCEAN ENCOUNTERS"
BUT AMERICA KNOWS ME BETTER THESE DAYS AS --
MARINEMAN

CC

With Steve 'MARINEMAN' Ocean

MARINEMAN
PREVIEW SPECIAL!
www.imagecomics.com

QUESTIONABLE THINGS

THREE OF SEVEN

026

JUN 2010

$3.50

APPROVED BY THE COMICRAFT AUTHORITY

STARKINGS · CHURCHLAND · COOK
MEDELLIN · MORITAT · SZYMANOWICZ

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ACTIVE IMAGE

COMICRAFT SINCE 1992

RICHARD STARKINGS
President & First Tiger

JOHN 'JG' ROSHELL
Secret Weapon

SANTIAGO PEREZ
Wrangler

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TYLER SHAINLINE
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Production Artists

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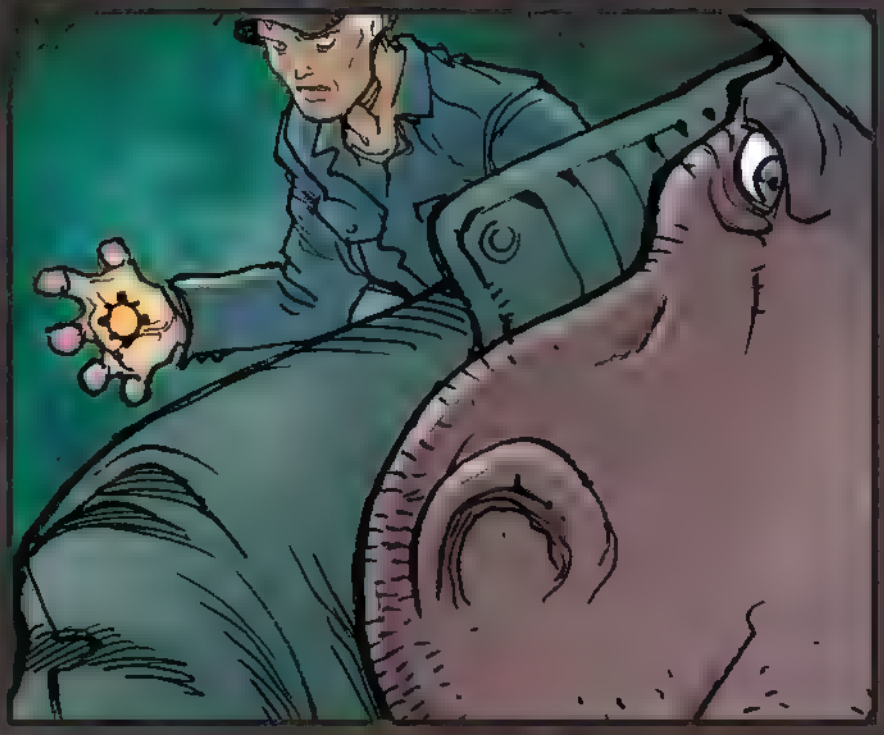
S I M M



TWO SIMM ROBOTS - ANDROIDS - HAVE ATTEMPTED TO REACTIVATE HIP FLASK AND OBADIAH HORN.

THE FIRST IS NOW LYING ON A SLAB IN THE INFORMATION AGENCY MORGUE; THE SECOND IS AT LOOSE IN THE CITY SOMEWHERE, HAVING BEEN SHOT IN THE HEAD BY THE SILENCER...

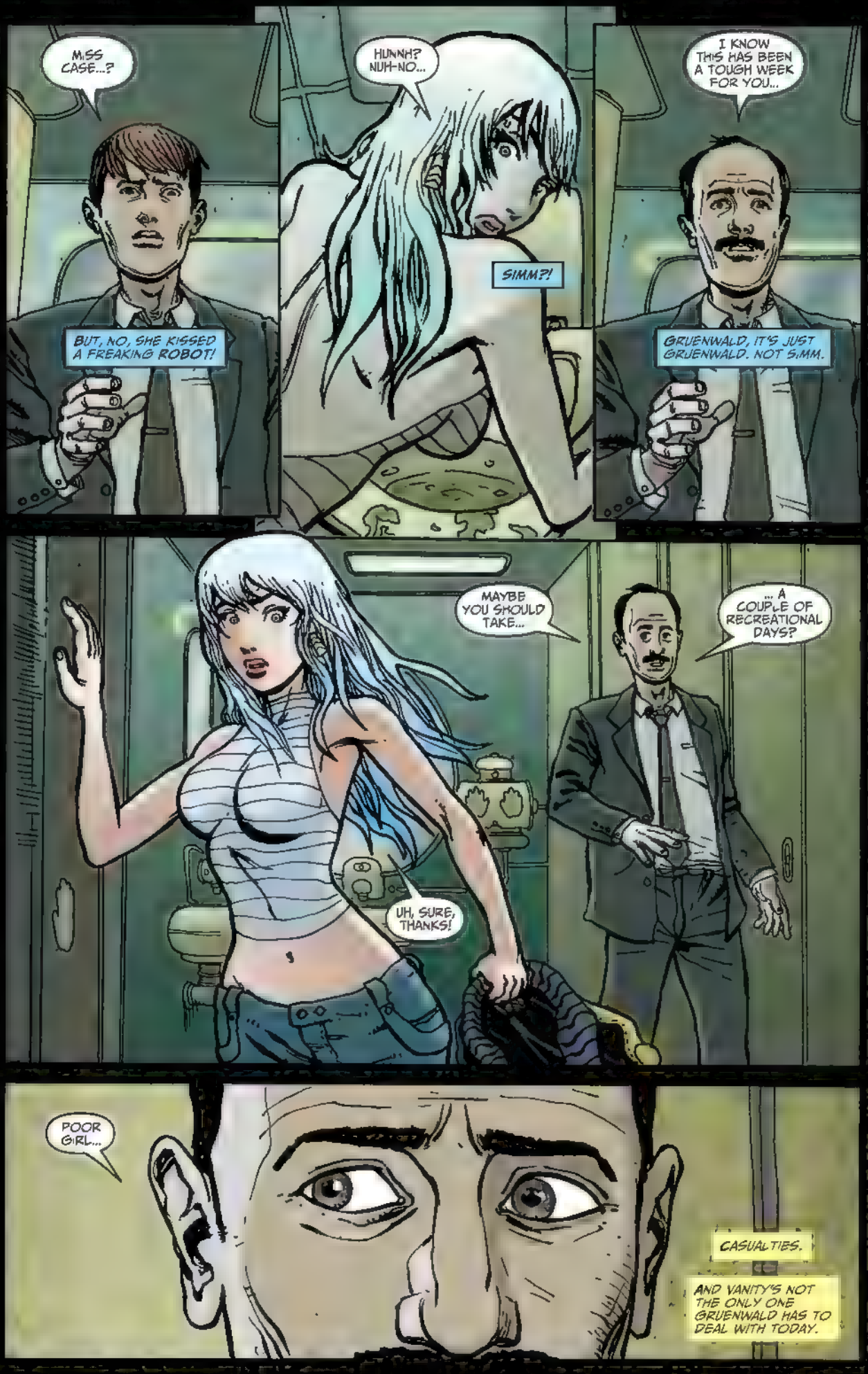
www.hipflask.com/elephantmen
e-mail your letters (and chocolate) to RICHARD@HIPFLASK.COM

VENICE BEACH • 2259
IT'S NOT JUST A ROBOT...
IT'S AN ANDROID.
IT'S ONE OF THE OLD *PLEASURE* MODELS...
Three Wishes
Story by Richard Starkings • Colors by Gregory Wright • Art Andre Szymanowicz

IT'S BEEN MODIFIED AND ENHANCED, OF COURSE.
BUT IT HAS A LOT OF THE BASIC FEATURES OF A NEXGEN SEVEN SIMM.
GLANDS IN THE MOUTH SECRETE MOOD ALTERING AGENTS THAT RENDER ITS CLIENTS SUSCEPTIBLE TO... SUGGESTION.
IF IT KISSED YOU, YOU'D IMMEDIATELY EXPERIENCE INCREASED PRODUCTION OF TESTOSTERONE OR PHEROMONES, DEPENDING ON YOUR SEX...
WAIT... A SIMM?
HUH?
YES, IT'S AN ACRONYM... SEX, UH, IMPERATIVE MALE MODEL... OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...
IT'S BEEN ADAPTED TO STORE AND RELEASE THE IMPERIUMITE THAT REACTIVATED YOU,* BUT IT STILL HAS THE TOUCH-ACTIVATED NANOBOT TECHNOLOGY IN ITS FINGERTIPS...
*See ELEPHANTMEN #23 & 24
IT WOULDN'T BE EFFECTIVE ON TRANSGENICS, BUT IF IT TOUCHED A HUMAN, IT WOULD RELEASE NANOBOTS, CARRYING A POWERFUL ANTI-ANXIETY DRUG, INTO THE BLOODSTREAM.
EVEN SO... I FEEL VIOLATED.
SIMM.
A DIFFERENT MODEL, BUT SHE RECOGNIZES HIM NOW.
THE REPORTER!
THE ONE THAT DRAGGED HER TO IVORY TOWERS...*

VANITY...?
SWEETHEART, ARE YOU FEELING OKAY?
NO!
VANITY CASE WISHES SHE WAS DEAD.

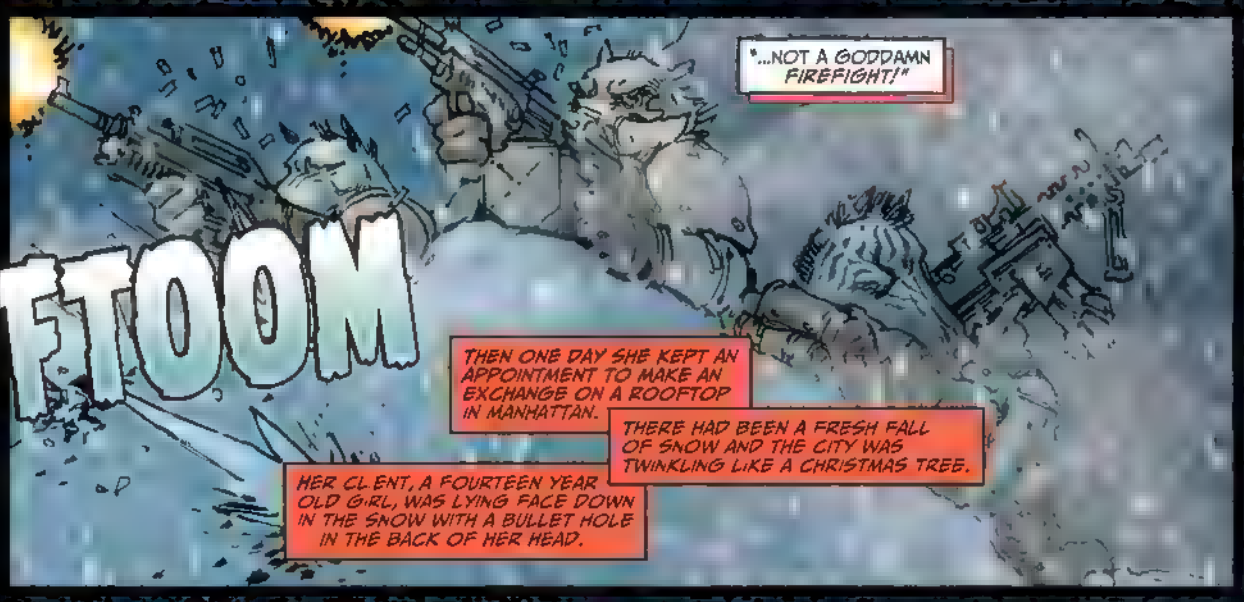
THAT DAY ON THE BEACH IN SANTA MONICA *
..THEN AT THE SUSHI SHACK..
...AND THE ELEVATOR...*
*See ELEPHANTMEN #15
*See ELEPHANTMEN #22
IT ALL MAKES A SICK KIND OF SENSE NOW.
BAD ENOUGH THAT SHE KISSED A STRANGER.
...UHHHH...

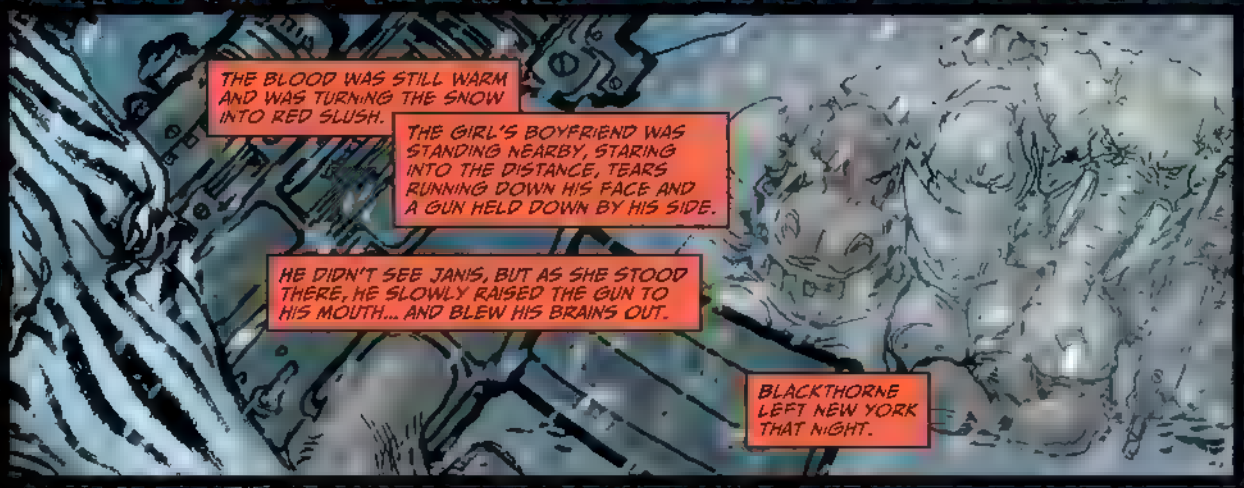

MISS CASE...?
BUT, NO, SHE KISSED A FREAKING ROBOT!
HUNNH? NUH-NO...
SIMM?!
I KNOW THIS HAS BEEN A TOUGH WEEK FOR YOU...
GRUENWALD, IT'S JUST GRUENWALD. NOT SIMM.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD TAKE...
... A COUPLE OF RECREATIONAL DAYS?
UH, SURE, THANKS!
POOR GIRL...
CASUALTIES.
AND VANITY'S NOT THE ONLY ONE GRUENWALD HAS TO DEAL WITH TODAY.

DOWNTOWN L.A 2259
JANIS BLACKTHORNE WISHES SHE HAD NEVER HEARD OF THE ELEPHANTMEN .
HAD SHE NOT SIGNED UP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS EUROPEAN TASKFORCE IN '39, HER SYMPATHIES MIGHT HAVE BEEN A LITTLE DIFFERENT.
AFTER ALL, SHE KNOWS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FEEL UNWANTED.
BRAKATABRAKATABRAKATA
HER PARENTS HAD KICKED HER OUT WHEN SHE WAS BARELY FIFTEEN YEARS OLD.
SHE CAME HOME FROM SCHOOL ONE SUNNY DAY ONLY TO FIND ALL THE LOCKS CHANGED AND HER BELONGINGS STREWN IN THE FRONT YARD.
SHE HAS NEVER SEEN HER PARENTS SINCE.
31
32

Breakdowns by Vince Lee • Finished Art by Moritat & Boo Cook

BY THE TIME SHE WAS SEVENTEEN, JANIS WAS LIVING IN A SQUAT AND RUNNING DRUGS ON THE STREETS OF NEW YORK.
SHE MADE A LOT OF MONEY; SHE DRESSED HERSELF WELL AND DINED AT FINE RESTAURANTS -- IN SHORT, SHE PROVED TO HERSELF THAT SHE COULD SURVIVE ON HER OWN. THERE WERE DAYS BACK THEN WHEN SHE FELT FRIGGING INVINCIBLE.
WHO HAS MY HELMET--?
WHO HAS MY FRIGGING HELMET?!
DAMN, THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A STRAIGHTFORWARD AIRLIFT...
BRAKATABRAKATABRAKATAB
FTOOM
BRAKATABRAKATA
LYNGEN. NORWAY . 2240

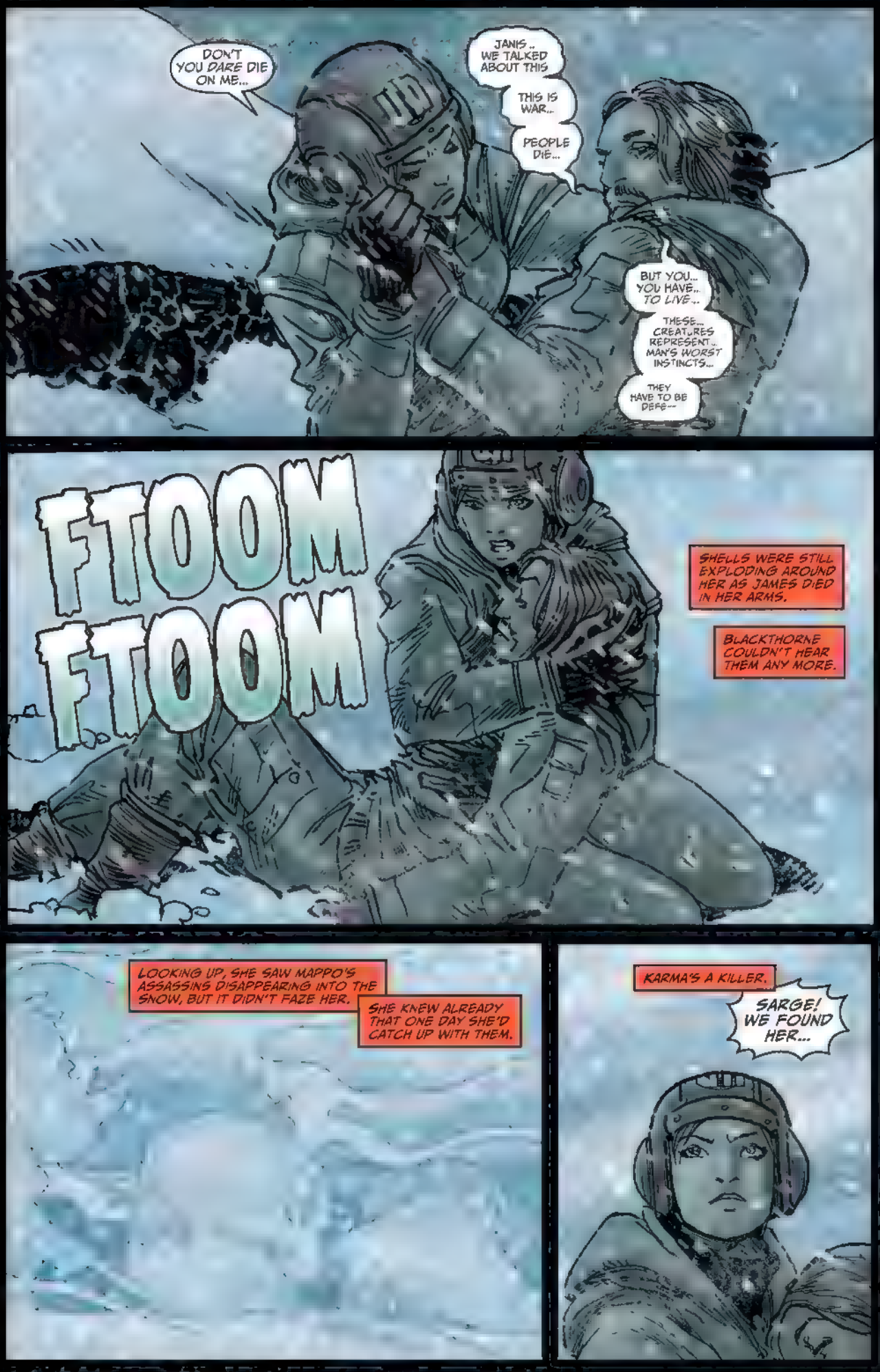

"...NOT A GODDAMN FIREFIGHT!"
FTOOM
THEN ONE DAY SHE KEPT AN APPOINTMENT TO MAKE AN EXCHANGE ON A ROOFTOP IN MANHATTAN.
THERE HAD BEEN A FRESH FALL OF SNOW AND THE CITY WAS TWINKLING LIKE A CHRISTMAS TREE.
HER CLENT, A FOURTEEN YEAR OLD GIRL, WAS LYING FACE DOWN IN THE SNOW WITH A BULLET HOLE IN THE BACK OF HER HEAD.


THE BLOOD WAS STILL WARM AND WAS TURNING THE SNOW INTO RED SLUSH.
THE GIRL'S BOYFRIEND WAS STANDING NEARBY, STARING INTO THE DISTANCE, TEARS RUNNING DOWN HIS FACE AND A GUN HELD DOWN BY HIS SIDE.
HE DIDN'T SEE JANIS, BUT AS SHE STOOD THERE, HE SLOWLY RAISED THE GUN TO HIS MOUTH... AND BLEW HIS BRAINS OUT.
BLACKTHORNE LEFT NEW YORK THAT NIGHT.

TWO MONTHS LATER, SHE WAS ON A U N AIRCRAFT CARRIER ON HER WAY TO DENMARK.
SHE MET JAMES ON THE SHIP AND, AFTER THEY FIRST MADE LOVE, THEY BECAME INSEPARABLE.
THERE YOU GO -- MINE LOOKS SO MUCH BETTER ON YOU, ANYWAY...
CUTE. TAKE COVER, HON...
BRAKATABRAK
IT WAS LIKE HER LUCK HAD CHANGED.
SOMEHOW SHE'D KNOWN THAT IF SHE'D HAVE STAYED IN NEW YORK, SOONER OR LATER THE COPS'D FIND HER ON SOME ROOFTOP WITH A BULLET IN HER SKULL.
THE U.N NAVY SORTED HER OUT. PUT HER ON THE RIGHT SIDE.
SHE WASN'T ONE OF THE MONSTERS ANY MORE...
SHE WAS FIGHTING MONSTERS...
BRAKATABRAKATABRAKATA
UNHK--
GIVE ME THAT, MONKEY--

THEY'RE JUST HUMANS. THEY SHOULD BE RUNNING FROM US!
FTOOM FTOOM FTOOM
HOLY FRIGGING HELL! THIS ONE DOESN'T KNOW WHEN HE'S BEAT!
JAMES! GET EVERYONE BACK BEHIND COVER...
YOU HEARD THE SERGEANT -- FALL BACK! FALL BACK!
FTOOM
I'M GONNA TAKE THAT OVERS ZED HANDBAG--
BRAKATA
FTOOM

"...OUT!"
BRAKATABRAK
NOW RUN ALONG BACK TO YOUR CAGE AND WAIT FOR FEEDING TIME.
JH, SERGEANT BLACKTHORNE...
FTOOM FTOOM
IT'S LIEUTENANT CONNERS...
HE, UH... TOOK A HEAD SHOT...
HE'S NOT GOING TO MAKE IT.
DEEP DOWN INSIDE SHE ALWAYS KNEW....
SHE KNEW SHE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE TWO STAR CROSS'D LOVERS ON THE ROOFTOP.
SHE KNEW THAT ONE DAY THE PAST WOULD CATCH UP WITH HER...
JAMES!
...THAT THERE WOULD BE BLOOD IN THE SNOW AGAIN.
UHH--
SHE ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HERS.
KARMA'S A KILLER.
MY FAULT.. THIS IS MY FAULT...

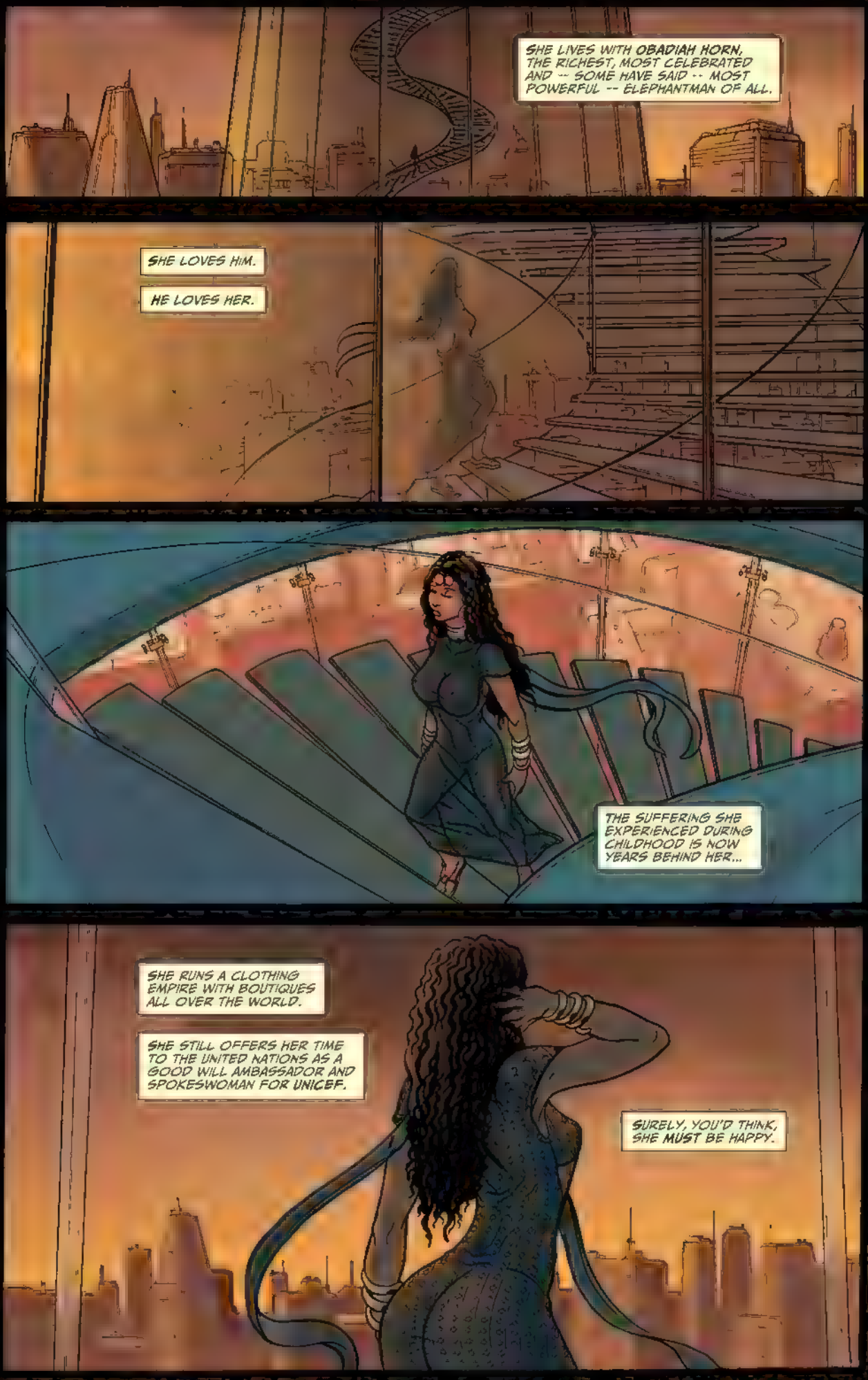

DON'T YOU DARE DIE ON ME...
JANIS.. WE TALKED ABOUT THIS
THIS IS WAR..
PEOPLE DIE...
BUT YOU... YOU HAVE.. TO LIVE..
THESE... CREATURES REPRESENT.. MAN'S WORST INSTINCTS...
THEY HAVE TO BE DEFE--
FTOOM FTOOM
SHELLS WERE STILL EXPLODING AROUND HER AS JAMES DIED IN HER ARMS.
BLACKTHORNE COULDN'T HEAR THEM ANY MORE.
LOOKING UP, SHE SAW MAPPO'S ASSASSINS DISAPPEARING INTO THE SNOW, BUT IT DIDN'T FAZE HER.
SHE KNEW ALREADY THAT ONE DAY SHE'D CATCH UP WITH THEM.
KARMA'S A KILLER.
SARGE! WE FOUND HER...

SHE'S ALIVE!

THIS IS ICEBREAKER TO MOTHER...
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED... WE'RE READY FOR IMMEDIATE EVAC.
NO... NO, NOT EVERYONE MADE IT.
ZZZAPPP
MAN, MOST PEOPLE WOULDN'T HAVE EVEN SURVIVED THE FALL, LET ALONE UH, YOU KNOW... BEING SHOT IN THE UH...
SHUT IT, HAWKINS.
FIVE GOOD MEN ARE DEAD BECAUSE OF YOU..
I HOPE YOU WERE *WORTH* IT, BITCH
OH, MAN, AS IF KEEPING THE PEACE WASN'T BAD ENOUGH BEFORE...
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO, IF THIS MISSION WAS ABOUT PEACEKEEPING, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE SIGNED UP OFFICERS LIKE SERGEANT BLACKTHORNE.
OH YEAH, JANIS BLACKTHORNE IS SICK TO DEATH OF ELEPHANTMEN.

WHICH MAKES YOU WONDER WHY SHE EVER LET THE POWERS THAT BE TALK HER INTO TAKING ON INFORMATION AGENTS HIP FLASK AND EBONY HIDE AS HER PARTNERS...
AGAINST MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN KIND!
Art by Axel Medellin

IVORY TOWERS • 2259
AT TIMES IT MIGHT SEEM TO THE CASUAL OBSERVER THAT ALL SAHARA'S WISHES HAVE BEEN FULFILLED.


SHE LIVES WITH OBADIAH HORN, THE RICHEST, MOST CELEBRATED AND -- SOME HAVE SAID -- MOST POWERFUL -- ELEPHANTMAN OF ALL.
SHE LOVES HIM.
HE LOVES HER.
THE SUFFERING SHE EXPERIENCED DURING CHILDHOOD IS NOW YEARS BEHIND HER...
SHE RUNS A CLOTHING EMPIRE WITH BOUTIQUES ALL OVER THE WORLD.
SHE STILL OFFERS HER TIME TO THE UNITED NATIONS AS A GOOD WILL AMBASSADOR AND SPOKESWOMAN FOR UNICEF.
SURELY, YOU'D THINK, SHE MUST BE HAPPY.

HOW MANY OTHER WOMEN HAVE THE WHOLE WORLD AT THEIR FEET?
HOW MANY WOMEN OF COLOR?
WHO WOULD THINK THAT SHE WANTED FOR ANYTHING ELSE?
MA'AM!

MISS SAHARA, I HAVE THE NEW DRESS SAMPLE YOU REQUESTED.
DESERT BREEZES IS WAITING FOR YOUR APPROVAL.
AH, PANYA, I HAVE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS.
IT IS JUST AS I IMAGINED... I HAVE TO TRY IT ON...
ALEXEI, WINSTON... THANK YOU...
YOU MAY LEAVE US NOW.

QUICKLY...

HOW DO I LOOK, PANYA?
PERFECT, MISS SAHARA. DON'T BE SURPRISED IF MY MAM CALLS OUT TO YOU ON THE STREET AGAIN!
FREEDOM.
I'LL BE BACK LATER, BOYS...

SAHARA LEARNED LONG LONG AGO NEVER TO TAKE IT FOR GRANTED.
SHE DOUBTS THAT OBADIAH WOULD EVER TRULY UNDERSTAND HER DESIRE TO WALK ALONE, UNNOTICED THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CITY.
SO SHE DOESN'T TELL HIM.
AS A TEENAGER, SHE SWORE SHE WOULD NEVER AGAIN BE ANY MAN'S CAPTIVE...
NOT EVEN IF SHE LOVED HIM.
SHE IS NOT, AFTER ALL, A PIECE OF PROPERTY.

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN SAHARA NEEDS TO BE WITH HER PEOPLE.
AND WHERE IS THE HARM IN THAT?
HE RECOGNIZES HER SCENT.
THE BULLET THROUGH THE HEAD HAS DISRUPTED HIS CENTRAL PROCESSING FUNCTION, BUT HE RECOGNIZES THE SCENT.
HE WAS DESIGNED TO STIMULATE AND RESPOND TO PHEROMONES.
SAHARA. OBADIAH HORN'S WOMAN.
OBADIAH HORN THE ELEPHANTMAN.
HIS MISSION --
HE DOESN'T REMEMBER HIS MISSION.
HE REMEMBERS.. VANITY CASE
VANITY IS THE KEY TO HIS MISSION.

CEDARS HOSPITAL • 2259
MIKI?
HUNNHH...
OH!
MISTER GRUENWALD!
PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR WAKING YOU UP. HOW IS YOUR COLLEAGUE?
"COLLEAGUE?!"
MY FRIEND, TINY, WILL BE FINE... WHAT IS IT TO YOU?
Art by Marian Churchland

WELL...
WE NEED A RELEASE FROM YOU... A NON-DISCLOSURE.
WHAT? YOU MEAN THAT ROBOT WAS RIGHT? THOSE THINGS THAT HAPPENED...
YOU'RE JUST GOING TO COVER IT UP?
BUSINESS AS USUAL?
MIKI — TINY SAVED AGENT FLASK WHEN HE REMOVED THE IMPERIUMITE.
THE AGENCY IS VERY... GRATEFUL.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #24
STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO MAKE SURE THIS KIND OF THING DOESN'T HAPPEN AGAIN.
ALL TINY'S MEDICAL EXPENSES HAVE BEEN PAID, MIKI. ALL THE DAMAGE AT YOUR WORKPLACE REPAIRED.
THINK ABOUT IT... THIS ISN'T A COVER UP.
IT'S ABOUT REDRESSING EVERYONE THAT WAS HURT... NOT JUST YOU, AND TINY...
BUT HIP AS WELL...
WHAT WOULD YOU WISH FOR HIM?
To Be Continued!

NEXT:

MEAT!

ALSO NEXT ISSUE...

6.13.2020. THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER VACATION.

13 YEAR OLD
CHARLEY MOORE
CAN'T WAIT TO GET TO THE MALL AND BE THE FIRST TO BUY A BRAND NEW...

ThrowBot™ v.1.0
Whatever you want, whenever you want it!℠

There's just one glitch.

CHARLEY'S PARENTS ARE ABOUT TO SERIOUSLY HACK INTO HIS PLANS...

CarBot™ v.2.3.2
Destination: GREENFIELD, CA
Estimated arrival in: 03:27:02

...LEAVING HIM STRANDED ALL SUMMER WITH NO FRIENDS...

bumble what's the buzz?
F/Y: Bummer
5P1D3R Totally dude

...NO NET, NO PHONE -- AND WORST OF ALL...

...NO ROBOTS!

ANDRÉ gabo

EDWIN MOORE SPENT HIS LIFE BUILDING ROBOTS. THEN ONE DAY, MYSTERIOUSLY, HE PACKED UP HIS TRUCK AND HIGH-TAILED IT TO THE STICKS.
NOW EDWIN LIVES BY THREE BASIC RULES:
1. Look after yourself.
2. Use only what you need.
3. NO ROBOTS!
There's just one hitch.
HIS GRANDSON CHARLEY IS COMING TO STAY FOR THE SUMMER.
AND...
ANDRE'
2010

C<3R

CHARLEY LOVES ROBOTS

A NEW SERIES BY

J.G. ROSHELL
is the co-author of COMIC BOOK LETTERING THE COMICRAFT WAY and TIM SALE: BLACK AND WHITE. J.G. has created fonts, logos, books and websites for hundreds of comics, including ASTRO CITY, MARVELS, STRANGE EMBRACE and ELEPHANTMEN.

ANDRÉ SZYMANOWICZ
is the artist of SUSHI NACHOS, and a contributor to COMIC BOOK TATTOO, POPGUN, THE SPIRIT and ELEPHANTMEN.

GABRIEL BAUTISTA
created the comic battling site ENTERVO.D COM and TOUT LE MONDE· THE HUNNY BUNN EXCHANGE. He is a contributor to POPGUN, THE SPIRIT and...you guessed it, ELEPHANTMEN

BEGINS NEXT MONTH RIGHT HERE IN **ELEPHANTMEN** ISSUE #27

www.CharleyLovesRobots.com

ELEPHANTMEN
WORLD TOUR
WONDERCON: SAN FRANCISCO

Check it out! Multi-talented Jonathan La Mantia made this incredible Ebony Hide head for this year's...

Moritat draws the Tale of a Tail!

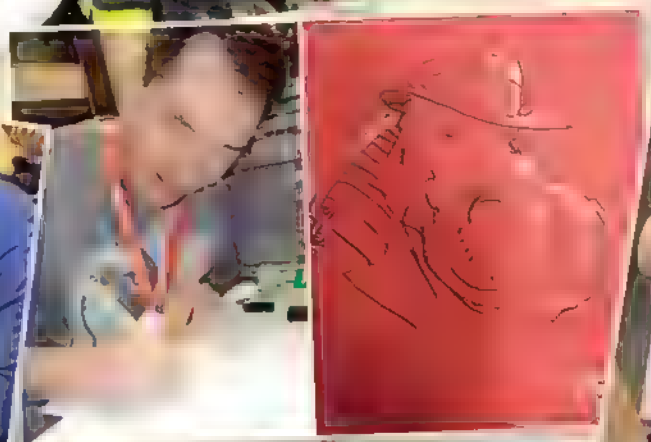
Vanity came to the booth sans tattoo! Rich fixed that.

The ever delightful Jen Louie as Vanity Case -- yes, she dyed her hair blue for real!

The always adorable Monifa as Sahara, whose outfit inspired Axel Medellin's rendition of Sahara in this issue!

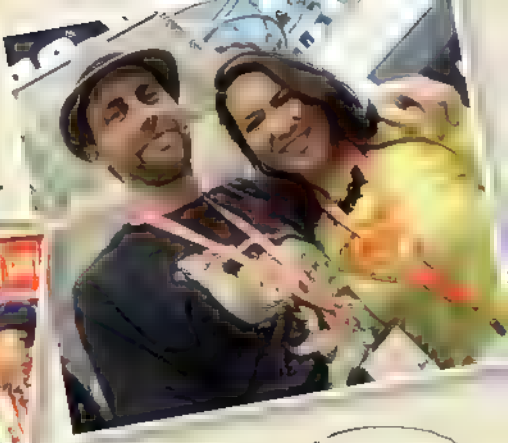
The magnificent Marley Zarcone said she "worked hard" to create this beautiful sketch of Ebony and Savannah for Kolorful Kat Rivera.

When it gets close to the end of the day, Moritat sees red.



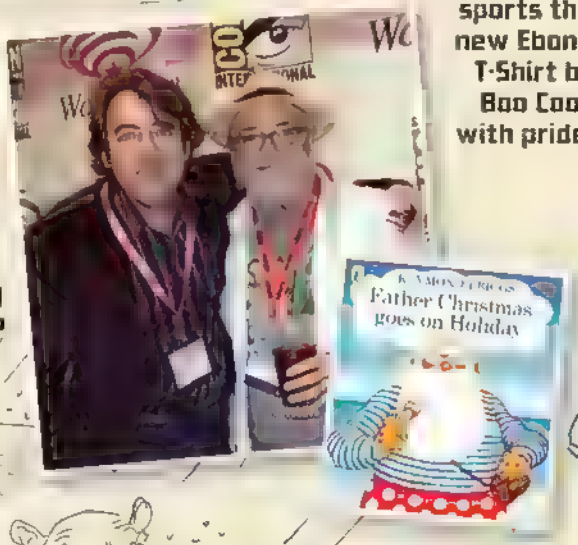
Rich and Gabe sketch off!

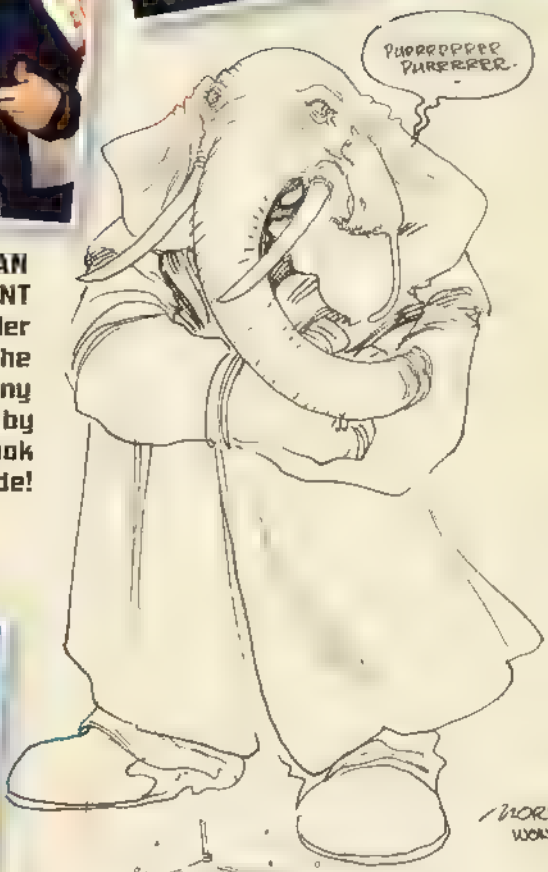
Perky Annie Pey gets her geek on with mild mannered JG Roshell.

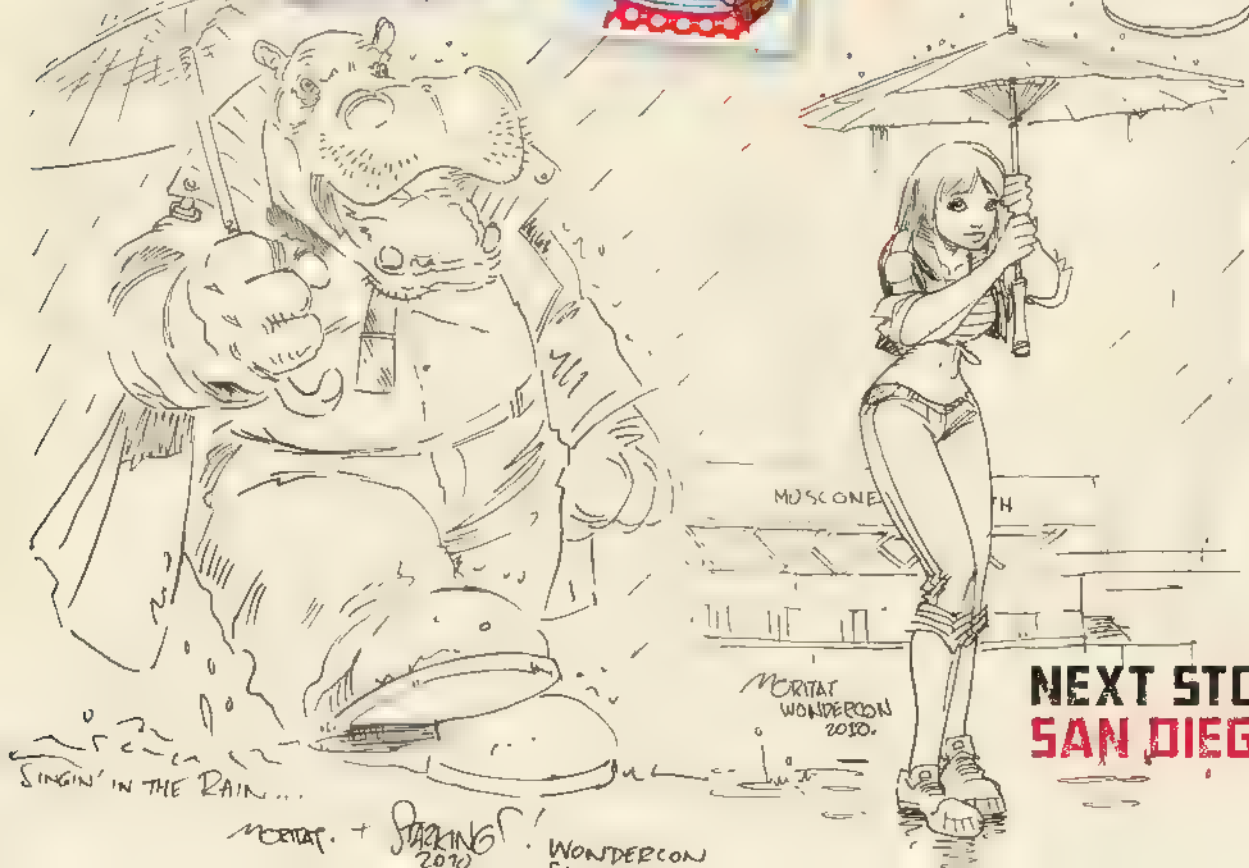


PHAN ELEMENT Simon Miller sports the new Ebony T-Shirt by Boo Cook with pride!

TURF co-creator and Brit talk show host Jonathan Ross gives Richard grief about his beard! FATHER CHRISTMAS ON HOLIDAY?!?







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ALL NEW SIX-ISSUE SERIES!

DAVID HINE SHAKY KANE

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CHEW

QUESTIONABLE THINGS

FOUR OF SEVEN

027

SEP 2010

STARKINGS · MEDELLIN · HOWARD

ACTIVE MAGE
COMICRAFT SINCE 1992

RICHARD STARKINGS
President & First Tiger

JOHN "JG" ROSHELL
Secret Weapon

SANTIAGO PEREZ
Wrangler

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FABRICE SAPOLSKY

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Doesn't Love Branwyn Raymore

BIGGLETRON
Still Nursing Her Broken Heart

TYLER SHAINLINE
Co-Respondent

BETSY GOMEZ
Leaves for Gun Show Event

SARAH DELMINE
Administrative Assistant

BRAD GILL
Art Director

JONATHAN CHAN
PRODUCTION MANAGER

VINCENT KUKUA
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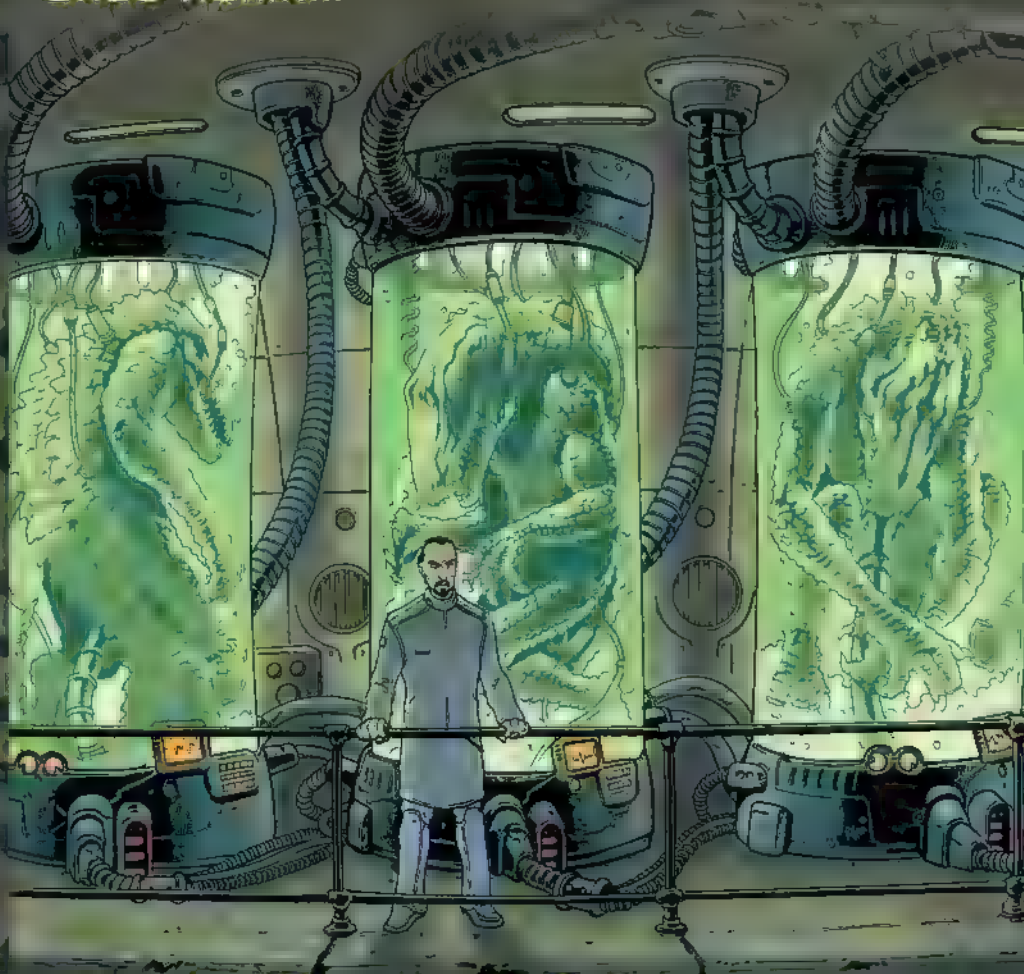
DIGITAL EDITION

M A P P O

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE BRILLIANT KAZUSHI NIKKEN, THE MAPPO CORPORATION GENETICALLY ENGINEERED THE ELEPHANTMEN – THE MOST FORMIDABLE FOOTSOLDIERS THE WORLD HAD EVER SEEN.

NOW, WAR IS OVER. THE ELEPHANTMEN LIVE AMONG US, BUT THERE ARE SOME WHO WOULD SEE THEM AS WARRIORS ONCE AGAIN...



www.hipflask.com/elephantmen
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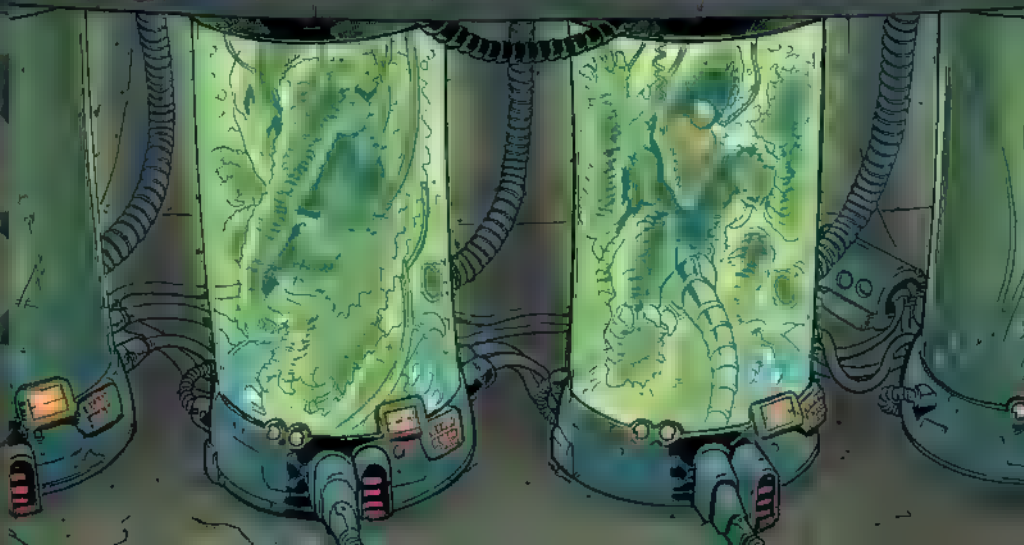
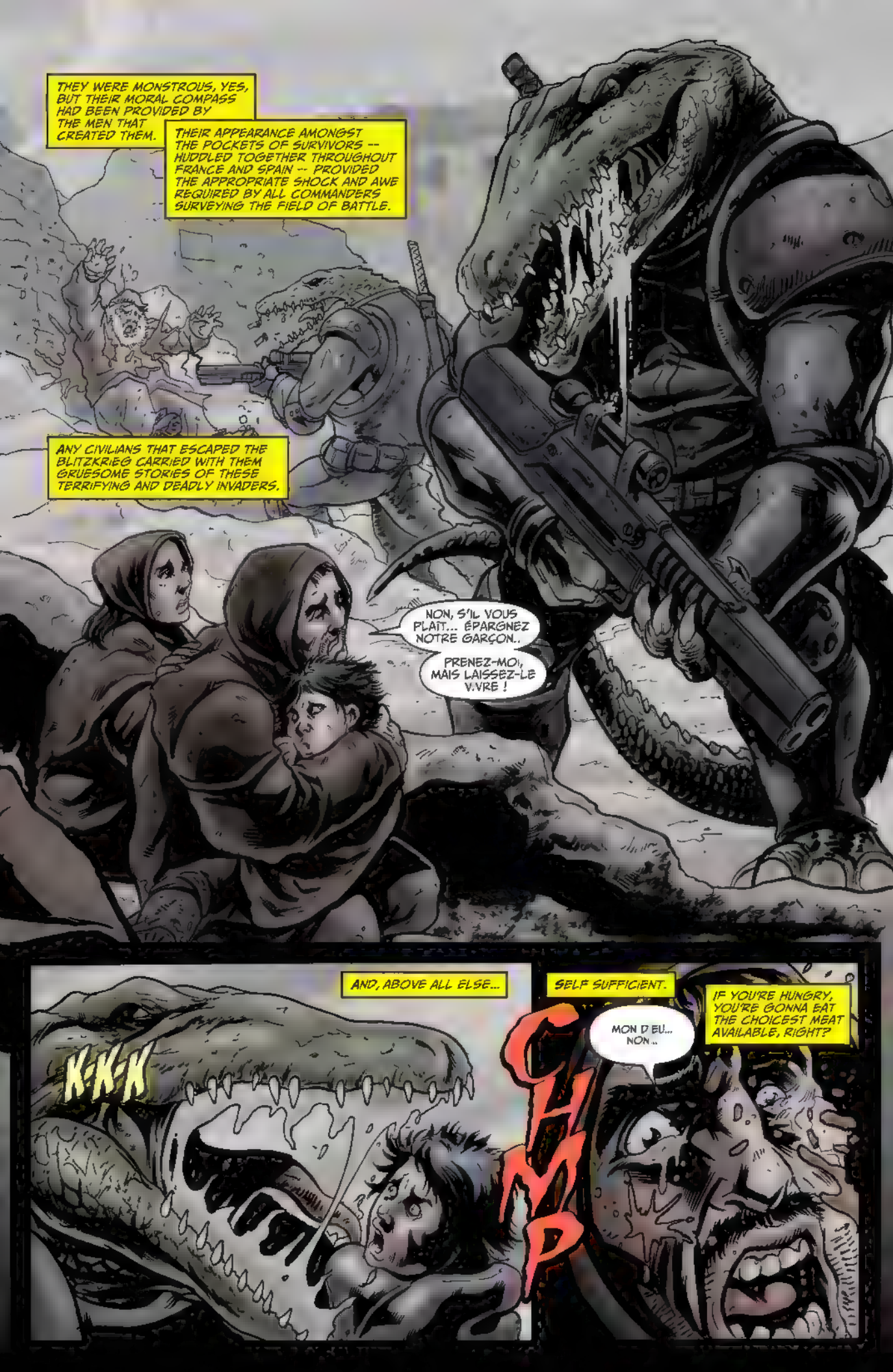


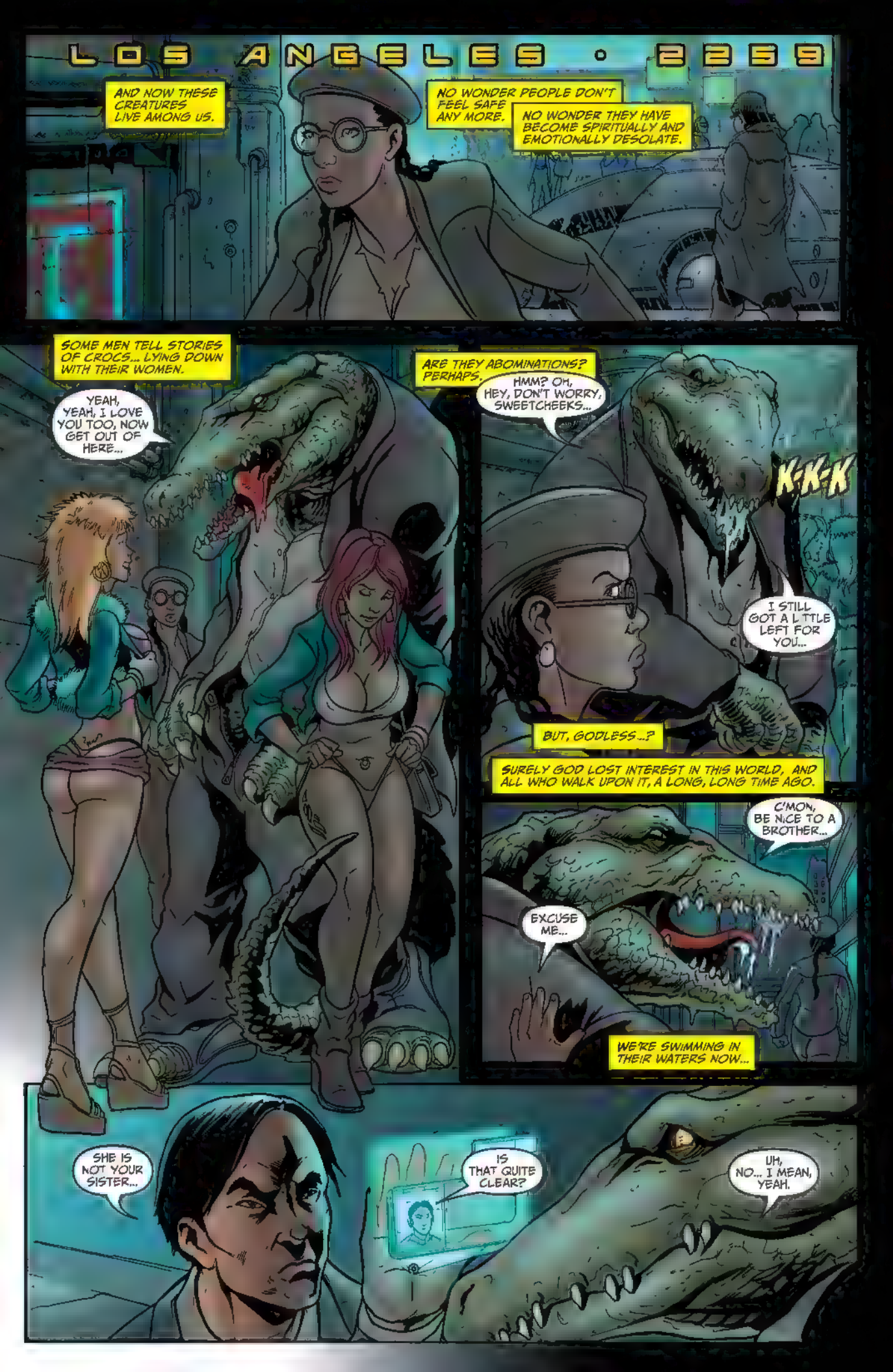
The SLAUGHTER HOUSE FIVE
MEAT.
K-K-K
K-K-K
or "Tea & Sympathy"
Richard Starkings, Writer & Gregory Wright, Colourist
Welcome Aboard Axel Medellin Artist!

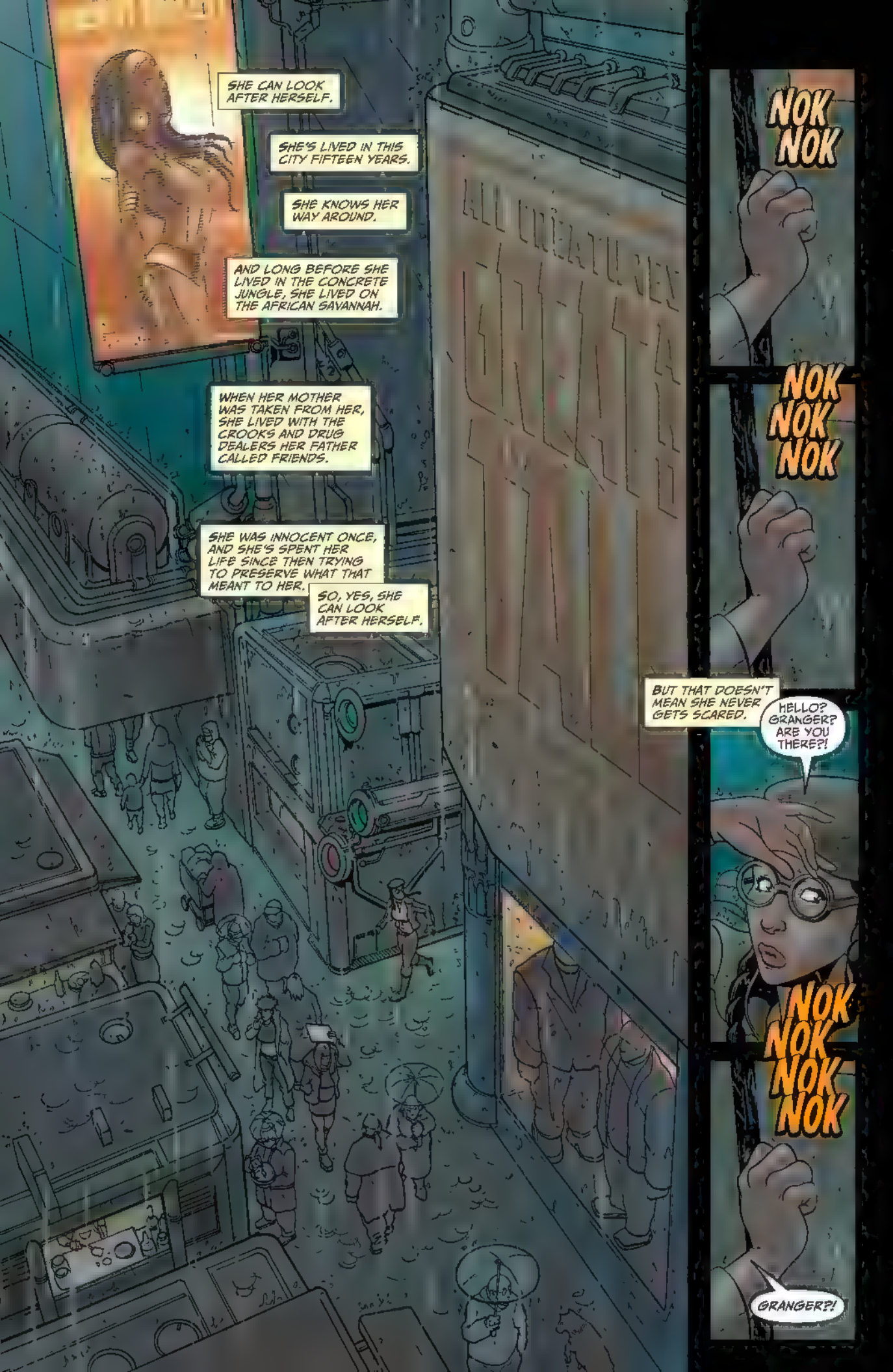
LOS ANGELES : 2259
ANTICIPATION OF THE TASTE OF THE WARM, SUCCULENT FLESH OF OTHER MAMMALS HAS CAUSED THE MOUTHS OF MEN AND WOMEN TO SALIVATE FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS...
FOR SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS, GOURMET COOKS HAVE PRIDED THEMSELVES ON CONCOCTING NEW WAYS OF PREPARING AND SERVING MEAT...
BUT, LET'S FACE IT, WHETHER YOU'RE A HOT BLOODED MAN ..
OR A COLD BLOODED REPTILE...
K-K-K
IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER IF YOUR DINNER IS A SMALL WILD RABBIT THAT BLED TO DEATH IN A TRAP IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, OR A GENETICALLY ENHANCED SUPERCOW THAT NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO ENJOY THE OPEN AIR... OR ESCAPE THE SMELL OF ITS OWN WASTE AS ITS FECES WAS SUCKED FROM ITS INTESTINES BY INDUSTRIAL TUBING.
THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS...
KRRAR

THE ONLY REAL THING OF USE TO MAN OR BEAST...
MRARRH!
CHMP
...IS LIFE FORCE!
NEVER MIND THAT INDUSTRIALLY FARMED ANIMALS ARE CLONED FROM GENETIC MATERIAL HARVESTED FROM ANCESTORS DEEMED SUPERIOR TO COMMON "TRADITIONALLY RAISED" FARMYARD STOCK.
NEVER MIND THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THESE ANIMALS, OR THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY ARE FORCED TO BREED...
SCHLAKT
IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, YOU'RE GONNA EAT THE CHOICEST MEAT AVAILABLE, RIGHT?
THANK GOD THE CIVILIZED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD NO LONGER HAVE TO KILL THE CREATURES THEY CONSUME. THE MEAT INDUSTRY KINDLY PREPARES THE CARCASSES FOR US SO THAT OUR AGGRESSIVE TENDENCIES CAN BE PUT TO BETTER USE -- IN OTHER AREAS OF SOCIETY.
CHOOM!
SPLAP!
NO WONDER THE MAPPO CORPORATION SAW -- AND ATTENDED TO -- THE OPPORTUNITY OF TAKING THE DISTASTEFUL TASK OF KILLING OTHER HUMAN BEINGS AWAY FROM THE CIVILIZED AS WELL...
VREEE
WHY WOULD MANKIND CHOOSE TO ENGAGE IN WAR IF HE COULD INSTEAD CONCENTRATE SIMPLY ON THE SPOILS?

SOUTHERN·FRANCE·2259
SO MAPPO CREATED THE ELEPHANTMEN, AND AFRICA PROVIDED THE NECESSARY GENETIC MATERIAL FOR THE SOLDIERS WHO WOULD LATER BE DESCRIBED -- BY MEAT EATERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD -- AS "GODLESS ABOMINATIONS!"
THE CROCS WERE THE MOST FEARED OF ALL THE CENTRAL AFRICAN ALLIANCE'S SOLDIERS... THEY WERE THE FIRST SENT INTO EUROPE AFTER THE VIRUS HAD DONE ITS WORST, KILLING MOST OF THE HUMAN POPULATION...
AT MAPPO HEADQUARTERS, THE CROCS HAD PROVEN THEMSELVES TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT TO TRAIN.
BUT ONCE UNLEASHED ON THE BATTLEFIELD, THEY WERE CONSIDERED THE PERFECT ADVANCE GUARD.
EFFICIENT: THEY COULD SMELL HUMAN BLOOD FROM HALF A MILE AWAY.
MERCILESS: REPTILES WILL EAT THEIR OWN YOUNG IF THE SURVIVAL OF THE PARENT IS AT RISK.
NON... NON. S'IL VOUS PLAIT. AYEZ PITIÉ DE NOS ÂMES !

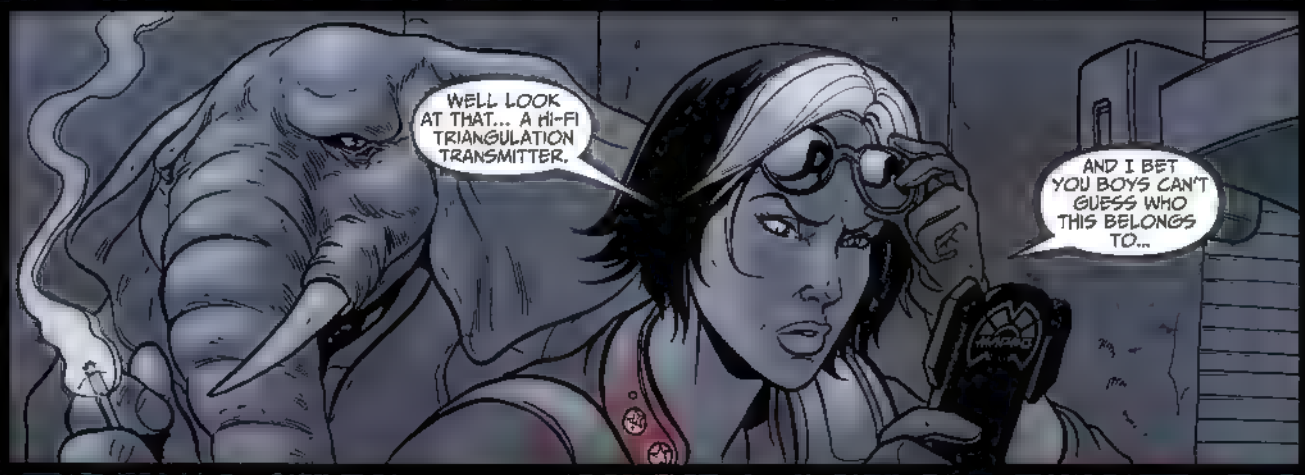

THEY WERE MONSTROUS, YES, BUT THEIR MORAL COMPASS HAD BEEN PROVIDED BY THE MEN THAT CREATED THEM.
THEIR APPEARANCE AMONGST THE POCKETS OF SURVIVORS -- HUDDLED TOGETHER THROUGHOUT FRANCE AND SPAIN -- PROVIDED THE APPROPRIATE SHOCK AND AWE REQUIRED BY ALL COMMANDERS SURVEYING THE FIELD OF BATTLE.
ANY CIVILIANS THAT ESCAPED THE BLITZKRIEG CARRIED WITH THEM GRUESOME STORIES OF THESE TERRIFYING AND DEADLY INVADERS.
NON, S'IL VOUS PLAÎT... ÉPARGNEZ NOTRE GARÇON..
PRENEZ-MOI, MAIS LAISSEZ-LE VIVRE !
AND, ABOVE ALL ELSE...
K-K-K
SELF SUFFICIENT.
MON DIEU... NON..
IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, YOU'RE GONNA EAT THE CHOICEST MEAT AVAILABLE, RIGHT?
CHMP


LOS ANGELES • 2259
AND NOW THESE CREATURES LIVE AMONG US.
NO WONDER PEOPLE DON'T FEEL SAFE ANY MORE.
NO WONDER THEY HAVE BECOME SPIRITUALLY AND EMOTIONALLY DESOLATE.
SOME MEN TELL STORIES OF CROCS... LYING DOWN WITH THEIR WOMEN.
YEAH, YEAH, I LOVE YOU TOO, NOW GET OUT OF HERE...
ARE THEY ABOMINATIONS? PERHAPS.
HMM? OH, HEY, DON'T WORRY, SWEETCHEEKS...
K-K-K
I STILL GOT A L TTLE LEFT FOR YOU...
BUT, GODLESS...?
SURELY GOD LOST INTEREST IN THIS WORLD, AND ALL WHO WALK UPON IT, A LONG, LONG TIME AGO.
C'MON, BE NICE TO A BROTHER...
EXCUSE ME...
WE'RE SWIMMING IN THEIR WATERS NOW...
SHE IS NOT YOUR SISTER...
IS THAT QUITE CLEAR?
UH, NO... I MEAN, YEAH.

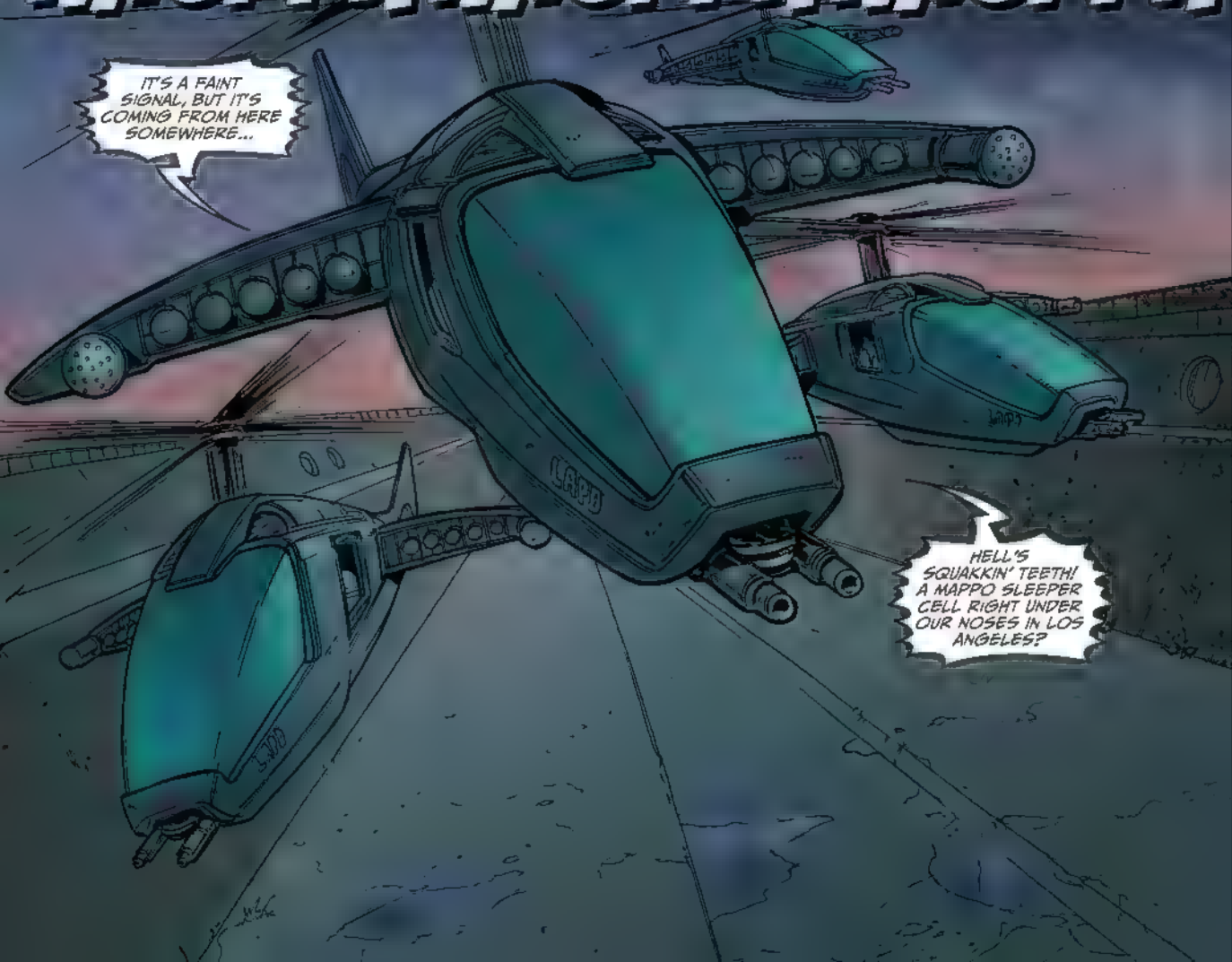

SHE CAN LOOK AFTER HERSELF.
SHE'S LIVED IN THIS CITY FIFTEEN YEARS.
SHE KNOWS HER WAY AROUND.
AND LONG BEFORE SHE LIVED IN THE CONCRETE JUNGLE, SHE LIVED ON THE AFRICAN SAVANNAH.
WHEN HER MOTHER WAS TAKEN FROM HER, SHE LIVED WITH THE CROOKS AND DRUG DEALERS HER FATHER CALLED FRIENDS.
SHE WAS INNOCENT ONCE, AND SHE'S SPENT HER LIFE SINCE THEN TRYING TO PRESERVE WHAT THAT MEANT TO HER.
SO, YES, SHE CAN LOOK AFTER HERSELF.
NOK NOK
NOK NOK NOK
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN SHE NEVER GETS SCARED.
HELLO? GRANGER? ARE YOU THERE?!
NOK NOK NOK NOK
GRANGER?!

YES, YES I'M COMING! BJT YOU'RE LUCKY I'M STILL HERE...
NOK NOK NOK
IT'S LATE AND I CLOSED UP ALRE--
OH!
SAHARA!

SOMEWHERE IN L.A.
HOW? HOW HAS THIS HAPPENED?
WE ARE NOT READY YET!
I'M NOW TRACKING FIVE L.A.P.D COPTERS LESS THAN TEN MILES AWAY
WE'VE LOST TWO OPERATIVES ALL ON ACCOUNT OF ONE SIMM ROBOT!!
THIS ONE AIN'T GOING TO BE TALKING EITHER, BLACKTHORNE.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #23
THAT HAS TO BE IT... THEY WERE CAUGHT
*THEY'VE GIVEN US AWAY!
WHAT HAVE WE HERE?



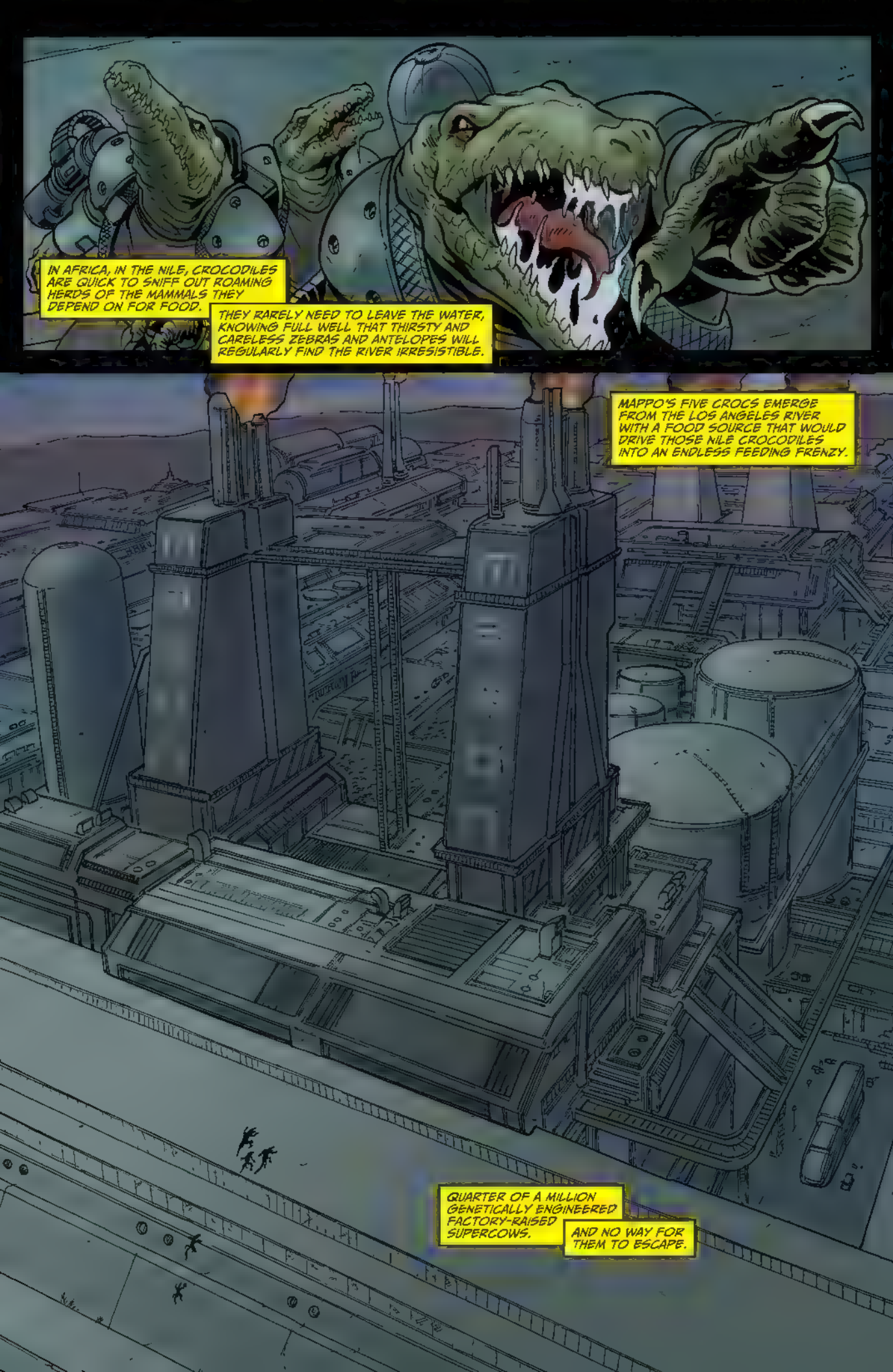
WHUPPA WHUPPA WHUPPA


IT'S A FAINT SIGNAL, BUT IT'S COMING FROM HERE SOMEWHERE...
HELL'S SQUAKKIN' TEETH! A MAPPO SLEEPER CELL RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSES IN LOS ANGELES?

AND PREPARE EVERY SIMM WE HAVE IN THE CHARGING BAYS...
IS THAT REALLY WISE, KRYTEN?
SINDEN... ARE YOU QUESTIONING ME?
RESPECTFULLY, SIR... YES.
WE SHOULD POWER DOWN THE ENTIRE BASE AND SIMPLY LEAVE.
SO CLOSE TO OUR MOMENT OF VICTORY?! NO, SINDEN...
MAPPO HAS BEEN HIDDEN FOR TOO LONG. PERHAPS THIS MOMENT IS NOT OF OUR CHOOSING...
BUT IT IS AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THE WORLD THAT NIKKEN IS NOT FORGOTTEN.
WE WILL RELEASE THE CROCS.
NOW.

FTOOM
TOOM
TOOM
WHUPP
KRAKOOM
LAB

HOLY FRIGGIN' HADES! WHY IS IT ALL MY WALKS IN THE PARK TURN INTO BARBECUES?!
GET THESE SHIPS DOWN!
WHUPPAWHUPPAWHUPPA
K-K-K
NOW IT HAS BEGUN...


IN AFRICA, IN THE NILE, CROCODILES ARE QUICK TO SNIFF OUT ROAMING HERDS OF THE MAMMALS THEY DEPEND ON FOR FOOD.
THEY RARELY NEED TO LEAVE THE WATER, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT THIRSTY AND CARELESS ZEBRAS AND ANTELOPES WILL REGULARLY FIND THE RIVER IRRESISTIBLE.
MAPPO'S FIVE CROCS EMERGE FROM THE LOS ANGELES RIVER WITH A FOOD SOURCE THAT WOULD DRIVE THOSE NILE CROCODILES INTO AN ENDLESS FEEDING FRENZY.
QUARTER OF A MILLION GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FACTORY-RAISED SUPERCOWS.
AND NO WAY FOR THEM TO ESCAPE.

BRAKATABRAKATABRAKATA
PISS IN A BUCKET... THESE SWAMP SUCKERS ARE SLIPPERY.
OKAY, YOU GRUNTS HAVE TO SEAL OFF ALL THE ENTRANCES AND EXITS IN AND OUT OF THIS PLACE, AND CALL IN EVERY OFFICER OUT THERE FOR BACK UP!
YOU TWO CHUMPS ARE GOING IN THERE WITH ME.

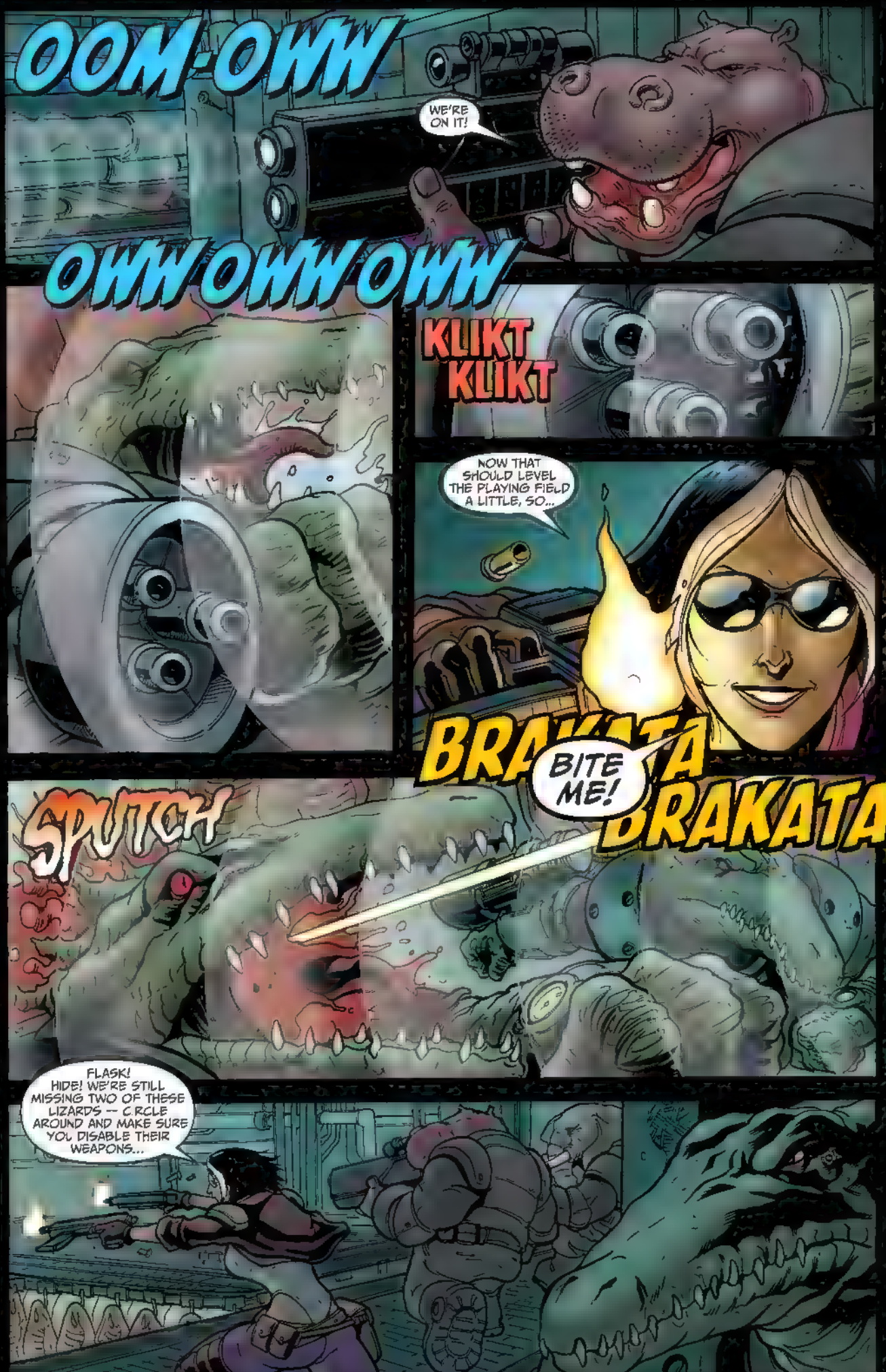
HERE WE ARE! FROTH OF LIQUID JADE! THE ELIXIR OF LIFE!
BEST DRINK OF THE DAY!
"TEA! THOU SOFT, THOU SOBER, SAGE AND VENERABLE LIQUID, THOU SMILE-SMOOTHING, HEART-OPENING, WINK-TIPPING CORDIAL... TO WHOSE GLORIOUS INSIPIDITY I OWE THE HAPPIEST MOMENTS OF MY LIFE, I ADORE THEE!"
THIS FABRIC IS SO SOFT... WHO IS YOUR SUPPLIER, JEREMIAH?
AHHHH... TRADE SECRETS! IS THAT WHY YOU CAME BY, SAHARA?
NO, OF COURSE NOT...
SHALL I BE MOTHER?
DISCOVERED BY THE EMPEROR SHEN-NUNG, TO THE CHINESE, TEA MEANT HEALTH AND MEDITATION...
THE JAPANESE TEA CEREMONY, CHA NO YU, WAS A DISCIPLINE TO ESTABLISH HARMONY, RESPECT AND PURITY...
PRESENTED TO QUEEN CATHERINE BY THE EAST INDIA COMPANY IN 1664, TO THE ENGLISH, TEA REPRESENTED ETIQUETTE AND PROPRIETY!
FOR YEARS, HERE IN AMERICA, TEA WAS A SYMBOL OF BRITISH OPPRESSION. IN 1773, AS AN ACT OF DEFIANCE, FREEDOM FIGHTERS THREW HUNDREDS OF TEA CHESTS INTO BOSTON BAY!
A SHOCKING WASTE--
BUT IT'S JUST DRIED LEAVES IN BOILING...
OH... SAHARA...
I'M SORRY... THERE'S SOMETHING TROUBLING YOU, ISN'T THERE?
YES...
YES .. BUT WHERE TO START...?

"SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED... SERENGHETI, MY FATHER, TRACKED ME DOWN WHEN OBADIAH AND I WERE HOSPITALIZED... I'M QUITE CERTAIN HE MEANT TO KILL ME."
"BUT I WAS SAVED BY TUSK, WHO HAD SOMEHOW ESCAPED INCARCERATION, ONLY TO DIE AT THE HANDS OF PEOPLE MORE IGNORANT AND INSANE THAN HE WAS EVER JUDGED TO BE..."
"SHORTLY AFTER... MY FATHER SENT ME TUSK'S SEVERED HEAD IN A BOX."
TO HELP YOU REMEMBER
"AND THERE WERE VISITORS TO IVORY TOWERS TOO... A JOURNALIST I THINK... AND A GIRL FROM THE INFORMATION AGENCY... SHE SEEMED INNOCENT ENOUGH, BUT THE MAN SHE WAS WITH..."*
*See ELEPHANTMEN #15 & 19
*See ELEPHANTMEN #17 & 23
*See ELEPHANTMEN #22&23
HE SEEMED TO KNOW THINGS... ABOUT OBADIAH... ABOUT HORN INDUSTRIES.
WELL... YOUR FIANCÉ DOES HAVE A LOT OF ENEMIES, MY DEAR...
AS DO ALL OF THE ELEPHANTMEN, OF COURSE.
IT'S WHY YOU'VE BEEN WITH HIM ALL THIS TIME, ISN'T IT?
TO PROTECT HIM...
FROM HIMSELF.
YES.

THIS GIRL FROM THE AGENCY... SHE D'DN'T HAVE WHITE AND BLUE HAIR, DID SHE?
SILVER TOP? TJMMY BUTTON SHOWING?
WHY, YES... HOW DID YOU KNOW?!
THAT'S VANITY CASE .. NICE GIRL. FUNNILY ENOUGH, SHE CAME IN HERE YESTERDAY.
WHAT--?
SHE BROUGHT THIS IN FOR REPAIR.
THAT'S .. THAT COAT BELONGS TO H BRONYMOUS ..
YES, VANITY IS RONNIE'S NEW, UM, GIRL FRIDAY.
HIP FLASK AND VAN TY CASE! HEH HEH, YOU COULDN'T MAKE THAT UP.
GRANGER... DO YOU THINK SOMEONE IS TRYING TO KILL ELEPHANTMEN?
IT DOES SEEMS LIKE SOMETH NG'S GOING ON, DOESN'T IT?
D D I MENTION THAT ELEPHANTMEN HAVE A LOT OF ENEMIES?
HOW DO I F ND VANITY CASE?

EBONY -- IS SHE INSANE? SHE HAS NO PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR... LET ALONE BODY ARMOR!
DON'T YOU KNOW HER STORY, FLASK?*
QUIT WITTERING AND TRIGGER THOSE NULLIFIERS!

*See ELEPHANTMEN #26


OOM-OWW
WE'RE ON IT!
OWW OWW OWW
KLIKT KLIKT
NOW THAT SHOULD LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD A LITTLE, SO...
BRAKATA
BITE ME!
BRAKATA
SPUTCH
FLASK! HIDE! WE'RE STILL MISSING TWO OF THESE LIZARDS -- CIRCLE AROUND AND MAKE SURE YOU DISABLE THEIR WEAPONS...

BRAKATA BRAKATA BRAKATA BRAKATA
DON'T THINK YOU CAN GET AWAY FROM ME, GATOR...
YOU'RE GONNA MAKE ME A NEW PAIR OF THIGH-LENGTH BOOTS!
BRAKATA BRAKATA BRAKATA BRAKATA
K-K-K
ARRGH!
CHMP
"DO YOU STILL DOUBT ME NOW, SINDEN?"
BLACKTHORNE!
HUMANS ALREADY FEAR THE ELEPHANTMEN...

...AFTER THIS PERFORMANCE, THEY WILL ONCE AGAIN DREAD AND HATE THEM!
AT WHAT COST? HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO BUILD AN ARMY FROM JUST A HANDFUL OF REACTIVATED CROCS?
AND THREE OF THEM ARE NOW DEAD!
IT'S VERY SIMPLE, SINDEN.
WE WILL DISSEMINATE THESE IMAGES ON THE SLATE.
DISTRUST OF THE ELEPHANTMEN WILL ONCE AGAIN SPREAD AMONGST HUMANKIND LIKE WILDFIRE.
THEY WILL TURN ON THE ELEPHANTMEN... AND THE ELEPHANTMEN WILL THEN TURN ON MAN...
AND BEFORE THAT HAPPENS, WE WILL HAVE SECURED THE ONE TRANSGENIC THAT CAN LEAD THEM...
RELEASE THE SIMMS.
ZZZZMMMMMMMMM
WHAT FOR--?
KRYTEN, WE HAVE TO CUT OUR LOSSES AND RUN... YOU ARE PUTTING OUT FIRE WITH GASOLINE
THE SIMMS WE HAVE USED SO FAR HAVE PROVED TO BE ALL BUT USELESS!
SINDEN... WHAT USE CAN YOU BE TO MAPPO IF YOU FOCUS ONLY ON FAILURE?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN OUR ACE-IN-THE-HOLE?
WE ACTIVATED EBONY HIDE ONCE BEFORE,* AND WE CAN DO SO AGAIN...

*Oh, you thought WE forgot?! See ELEPHANTMEN #21

NIGHTTIME. MYSTERY CITY
HOOTING HECK!
DUDE, ARE YOU OKAY...?
DID YOU HIT YOUR HEAD OR SOMETHING?
MAN, YOU NEED TO SEE A DOCTOR!
A... DOCTOR...?
NO... WHAT I NEED... IS TO FIND VANITY CASE.. AND YOUR HAT.
HUH...?
SHMPT
THANK YOU.
To Be Continued...

ANIMAL WRITES

Write to [illegible] or post on our boards @ [illegible] and

It's been a busy year for the ELEPHANTMEN team, and quite a while since we had the space for a letters page, so let's jump right in with Chris Murman's review of issue #24, which fortuitously allows me the opportunity to update all our readers on the comings and goings amongst the members of our ELEPHANTMEN team!

Rich!
Great issue, the last two or three issues have really reinvigorated my love of this title. Keep up the great work First Tiger, here's my review for the ComicsBulletin website...

While I can't stand it when comic book reviews leap to ridiculous amounts of hyperbole in describing their feelings, you're going to have to forgive me if I at least indulge a little for this review. After all, Moritat is back full time on art chores, or at least that's what I thought going in. In addition, the eight issue story arc titled "Dangerous Liaisons" wrapped with an amazing cliffhanger that only whet my appetite for the coming story. I wanted to have a deeper story and I'm getting it.

*Moritat had indeed intended to re-commit to ELEPHANTMEN through to issue #30, but DC made him an offer he couldn't refuse, and although he confidently anticipated being able to handle art on both THE SPIRIT and ELEPHANTMEN, the strain proved too much, and I suggested that it was best for him to concentrate on THE SPIRIT alongside our other ELEPHANTMEN and HIP FLASK luminaries, Ladrönn, David Hine, Gabe Bautista and André Szymanowicz! Wait, that's EVERYBODY -- who's drawing MY book?!?**

For the most part, First Tiger Rich delivered on what I was hoping for this month. Let me begin by lauding his decision to start the fall from grace with Hip Flask. With the exception of Obadiah and Trench, we've had the opportunity to read about lovable characters who had a tough past try to reclaim what's left of their life. Chief amongst them is Mr. Flask, who's been a sitcom dad since I discovered him. The first issue I read of this title had him hobbling around in a gigantic cast. We cheered for him and his budding relationship with Miki, praised his desire to be more human and less animal. Needless to say, him being outfitted with a device to denounce his human traits and bring to the surface his animal desires changes things a bit.

A sitcom dad?! But Hip is the character I most closely associate with ... dang, I'M a sitcom dad? HEY! Get off my lawn, Murman!

I will say that I didn't expect the story to have as much resolution as it did when I got to the last page. While I'm ready to see Hip go back to normal as much as the next fan, I thought Starkings would drag out the "possessed Hip Flask rampages through Los Angeles" idea a little further. Granted, there are plenty of consequences for his actions, which were more than evident on Miki's face as he snaps out of it. It's easy to see why the story needed to move on when you look at future solicitations.

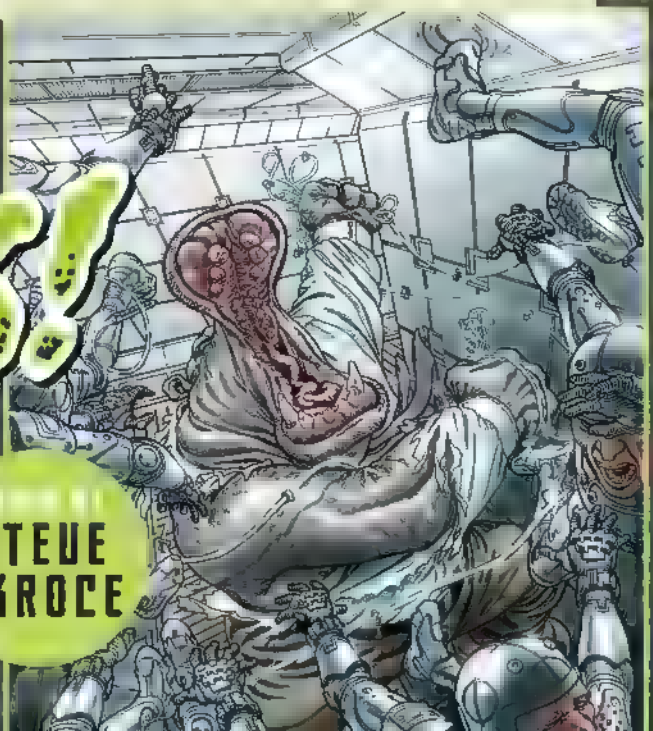
Oh, EASY is it...? Well, yeah, if you look at Jason Howard's fantastic cover for THIS issue, and um Steve Skroce's action-packed cover for NEXT issue and, well, I guess the J. Scott Campbell cover on #30 does give something away... but Camilla d'Errico's cover for #29...? Pretty much all that tells you is that the cover is Yummy. And that Vanity is in it. Which she is. »»

NEXT:

Send in the CLONES!

AS IF HIP AND EBONY DIDN'T ALREADY HAVE THEIR HANDS FULL WITH CROCS THIS ISSUE, NEXT MONTH THINGS GET WORSE WHEN MAPPO'S SIMMS ATTACK AND ATTEMPT TO FINISH THE JOB STARTED BY ONE OF THEIR OWN KIND IN ISSUE #23...

STEVE SKROCE



HERE IT IS! AXEL MEDELLIN'S SAMPLE PAGE IN BLACK AND WHITE

These MAPPO agents that have been toying with the Elephantmen are still on the loose and something tells me the gang is going to have to come back together to address this.

It's like you already read this issue... and yet blissfully unaware of developments in the not too distant future...

One other interesting aspect of this story is the growing divide between Horn and Sahara. We've always known Obadiah's dark side was lurking below the surface, but it was always believed that his bride-to-be Sahara kept that darkness at bay. Now, we learn she is keeping secrets of her own. It's possible that when the hidden truth comes into full view, Sahara will learn that she can't bring Horn back from the dark side (for lack of a better way to put it). I've always wanted to see Horn at his worst, mainly because at the core that's who his character is. Maybe we will see that somewhere during the "Questionable Things" arc.

And maybe not... but you're right about Sahara, she has her secrets and in the next couple of issues we'll see that she's not just all veils and curves...

The main detractor for this issue dealt with the art. I'll just get that out of the way. It's hard for me to gripe really, because it's nice to know that Moritat is on the path to recovery from whatever has been ailing him the past several months. He was just a machine for Rich when this title first kicked off, so much so that it was jolting to read my first issue without him doing the art. Suffice to say, I'm very familiar with the artist's style. How weird it was for me to open the cover and see the title page drawn by someone not named Moritat. It immediately took me out of the story, as I had to scan the all the names of artists that helped with art on this issue. Of course, I do not fault the creators if Moritat needed some help finishing things up. You want to get your issue out and sometimes there are just not enough hours in the day. It was just a tough first read for me. I'm sure as the issue of this arc come out, we will see less and less of that.

For the record, Ian Churchill nobly stepped in at the last minute to provide 15 pages of breakdowns to help Moritat pick up some speed. Boo Cook inked a couple of those same breakdowns shortly after our deadline had already whooshed past... Chris Burnham rounded out his work on issues #16 and #23 for the extra three page epilogue and André Szymanowicz, issue #22's artist, provided the beautiful splash page based on art by Ladrönn. Thanks to all on behalf of both Moritat, JG and myself.

This story arc should be exciting for fans of the series. A good amount of detective work mixed with action when things come to a head. Hopefully, we will see all of the Elephantmen make an appearance and in six more issues end with a bang. Thanks for the great stories as of late, Rich. I'd like to think I had a little part in prodding you along, or at least that's what my ego is telling myself.

Chris Murman
ComicsBulletin.com

Tell yourself whatever you like, Chris! How on Earth did I get this book done before you started reviewing it?!

The answer, of course, is the amazing* ***AXEL MEDELLIN!* *Axel had been bugging me for the chance of drawing ELEPHANTMEN since San Diego Comic Con 2008... check out his sample page opposite and you'll see why I got back to him for his contribution to our special 25th issue... little did I know then that he'd be available to take over the reins from this issue on...*

I'VE STRUGGLED FOR YEARS TO GET A BREAK LIKE THIS. I'M VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE A PART OF THIS AMAZING UNIVERSE, AND I'M HAVING A BLAST! I'M GIVING MY BEST TO EACH NEW PAGE, AND I HOPE THE READERS WILL ENJOY MY HUMBLE EFFORTS.
AXEL

INTRODUCING OUR GUEST COVER ARTIST

Jason Howard

Rich! pickings

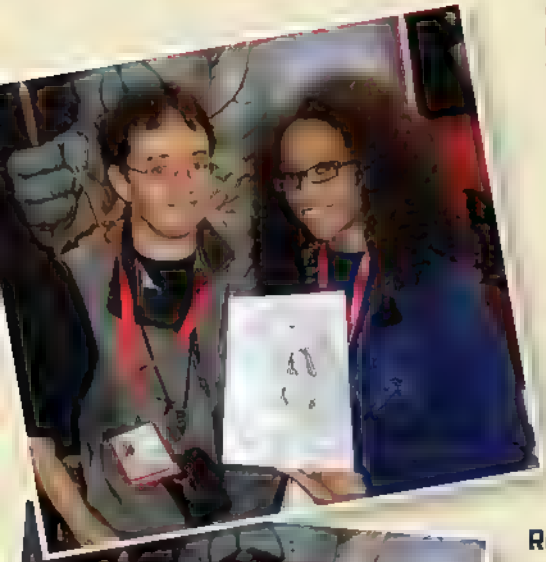
Jason is the artist of ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN and presented me with this issue's Awesome cover at Baltimore Comic Con last year, as a SURPRISE! No surprise then that Jason is a true gent -- watch for his new series from Image soon, and in the meantime don't miss SEA BEAR & GRIZZLY SHARK!

AND IN FULL COLOUR! WHO COULD RESIST?!

ELEPHANTMEN
WORLD TOUR 2010
SAN DIEGO COMIC-CON

When Axel agreed to spend time with us at the ELEPHANTMEN booth at San Diego Comic Con, we promised him ADVENTURE! EXCITEMENT and GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS! He thought we were kidding.

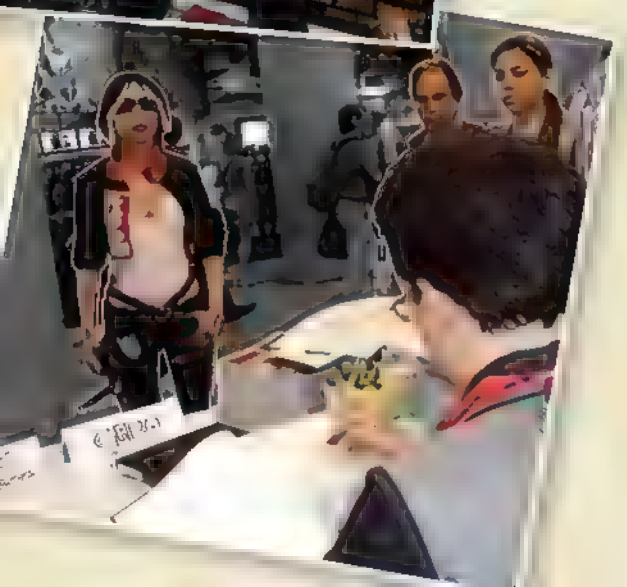
Nova as the mischievous MIKI, welcomes Axel on Preview Night.

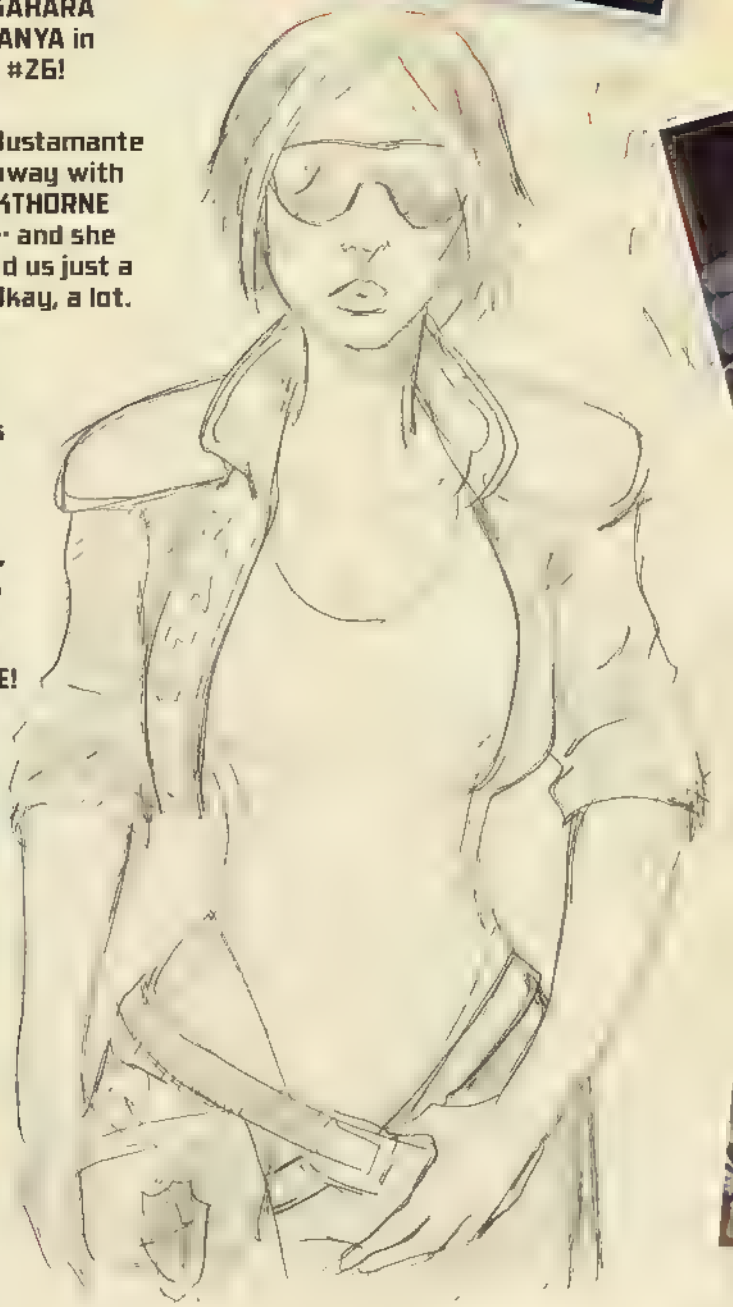


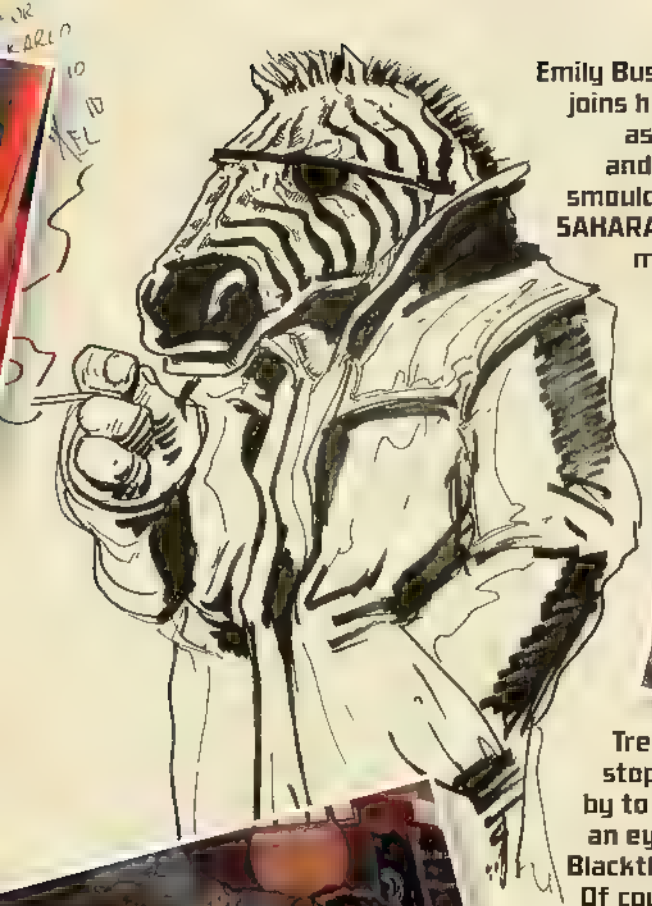
Axel presents Monifa with a gift for inspiring his rendition of both SAHARA and PANYA in issue #26!

Rosana Bustamante blew us away with her BLACKTHORNE costume -- and she also scared us just a little bit. Okay, a lot.

Under the eagle eye of Rosana's father, Francisco, and her sister, Emily, Axel creates this drawing of Rosana as BLACKTHORNE!

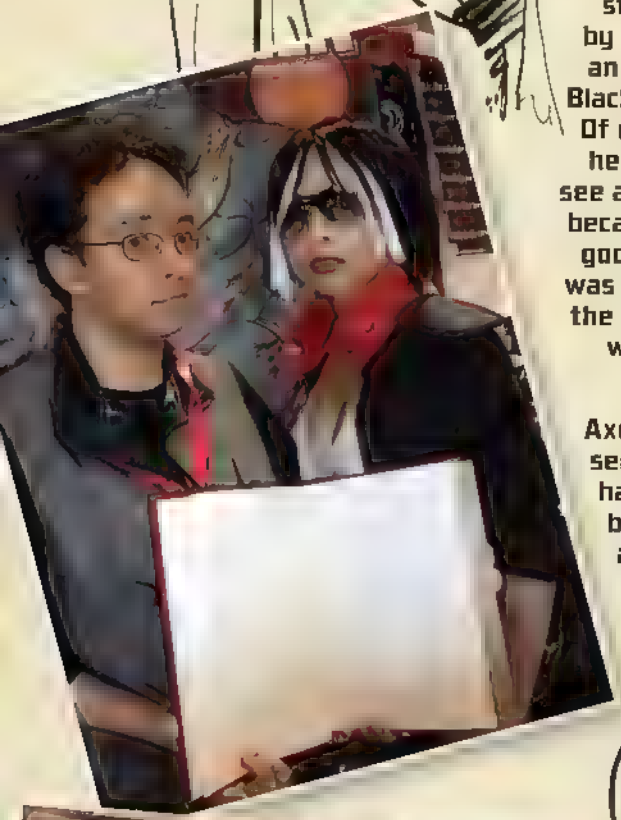






Emily Bustamante joins her sister as YVETTE and Monifa smoulders as SAHARA once more...

Trench stopped by to keep an eye on Blackthorne. Of course, he didn't see anything because his good eye was looking the wrong way.



Axel may seem happy but he's actually in fear for his life!

LATISMO interview Rosana and Emily because, well, why WOULDN'T they?

SAN DIEGO COMIC CON INTERNATIONAL

More pix and sketches from SAN DIEGO NEXT MONTH!

C<3R

CHARLEY LOVES ROBOTS

A NEW SERIES BY

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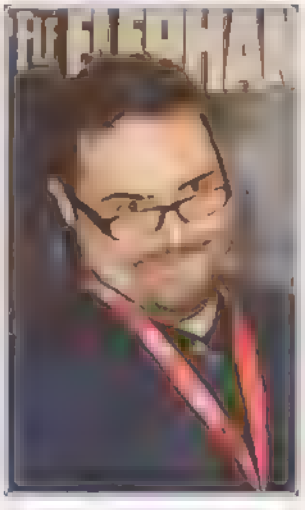
ARTIST & TONES

J.G. ROSHELL
WRITER & CREATOR

GABRIEL BAUTISTA
ARTIST & COLOR



BEGINS HERE >>

www.CharleyLovesRobots.com

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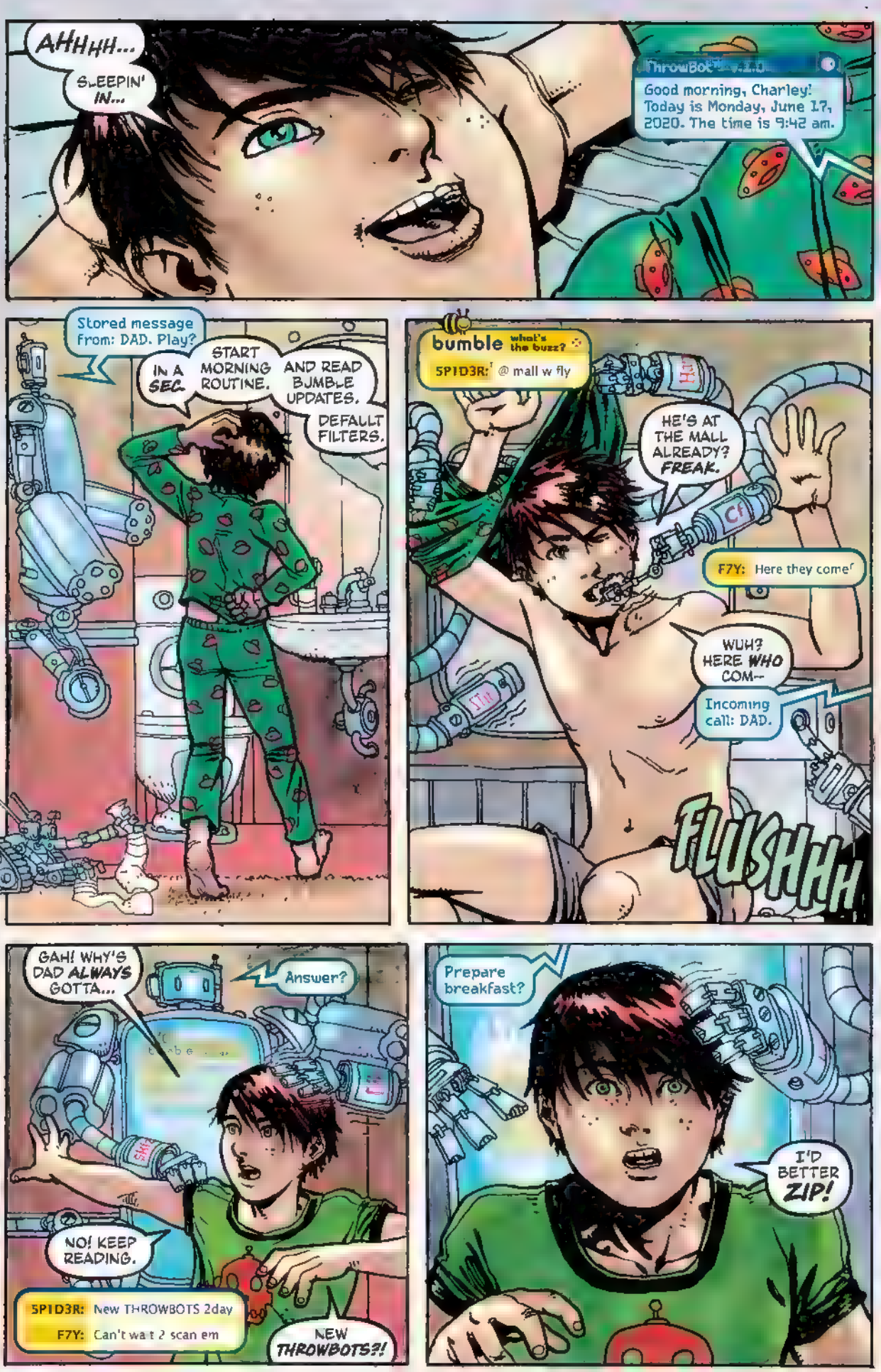
AHHHH...
SLEEPIN' IN...
ThrowBot
Good morning, Charley! Today is Monday, June 17, 2020. The time is 9:42 am.
Stored message from: DAD. Play?
IN A SEC.
START MORNING ROUTINE.
AND READ BUMBLE UPDATES.
DEFAULT FILTERS.
bumble what's the buzz?
5P1D3R: @ mall w fly
HE'S AT THE MALL ALREADY? FREAK.
F7Y: Here they come!
WUH? HERE WHO COM--
Incoming call: DAD.
FLUSHHH
GAH! WHY'S DAD ALWAYS GOTTA...
Answer?
NO! KEEP READING.
5P1D3R: New THROWBOTS 2day
F7Y: Can't wait 2 scan em
NEW THROWBOTS?!
Prepare breakfast?
I'D BETTER ZIP!

DON'T KNOW HOW I'M GONNA GET THERE, BUT...
New message from: DAD. Play?
MESSAGE
ALRIGHT, SURE. WHATEVER...
GOOD MORNING, SON!
HAPPY FIRST DAY OF VACATION! HOPE YOU SLEPT WELL! SORRY I CAN'T BE THERE TO
YEAH, YEAH... WHAT?
MESSAGE
SO, AH...
SO YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING . WHY...
...THERE'S A CARBOT IN THE GARAGE.
FWAP
WAIT
YOU KNOW YOUR MOM AND I BOTH HAVE TO BE AT WORK SO MUCH RIGHT NOW, SO...
SERIOUSLY
...RATHER THAN LEAVE YOU ON YOUR OWN ALL SUMMER...
...WE DECIDED TO SEND YO
A CARBOT?!
YEEEAHHHH!
GONNA BE THE BEST SUMMER EVER!
YOUR BEST SUMMER EVER!
TO BE CONTINUED...

AND DON'T MISS CHARLEY IN THIS YEAR'S CBLDF LIBERTY ANNUAL! ON SALE SOON!

#28 · $3.50 · NOV
ELEPHANTMEN UNLEASHED!
QUESTIONABLE THINGS
FIVE
STARKINGS · MEDELLIN · SKROCE

ACTIVE IMAGE

COMICRAFT SINCE 1992

RICHARD STARKINGS
President & First Tiger

JOHN "JG" ROSHELL
Secret Weapon

SANTIAGO PEREZ
Wrangler

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FABRICE SAPOLSKY

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Wants Her Own Goofy Credit

Art Director

JONATHAN CHAN
JORDIE BELLAIRE
VINCENT KUKUA
Production Artists

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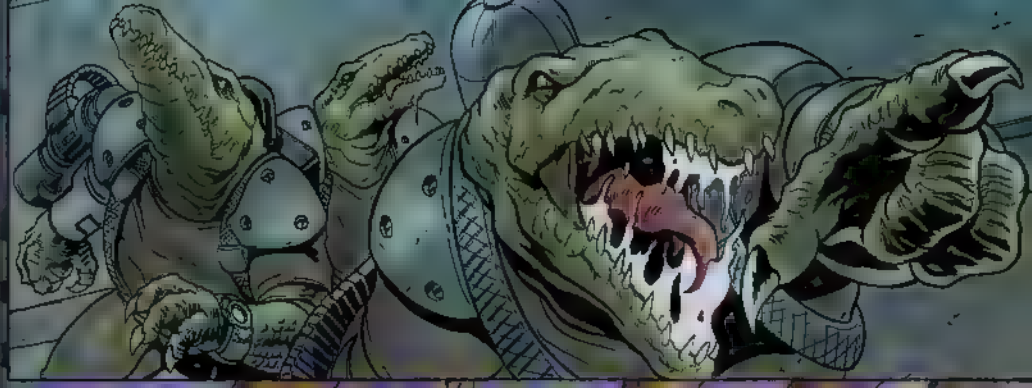
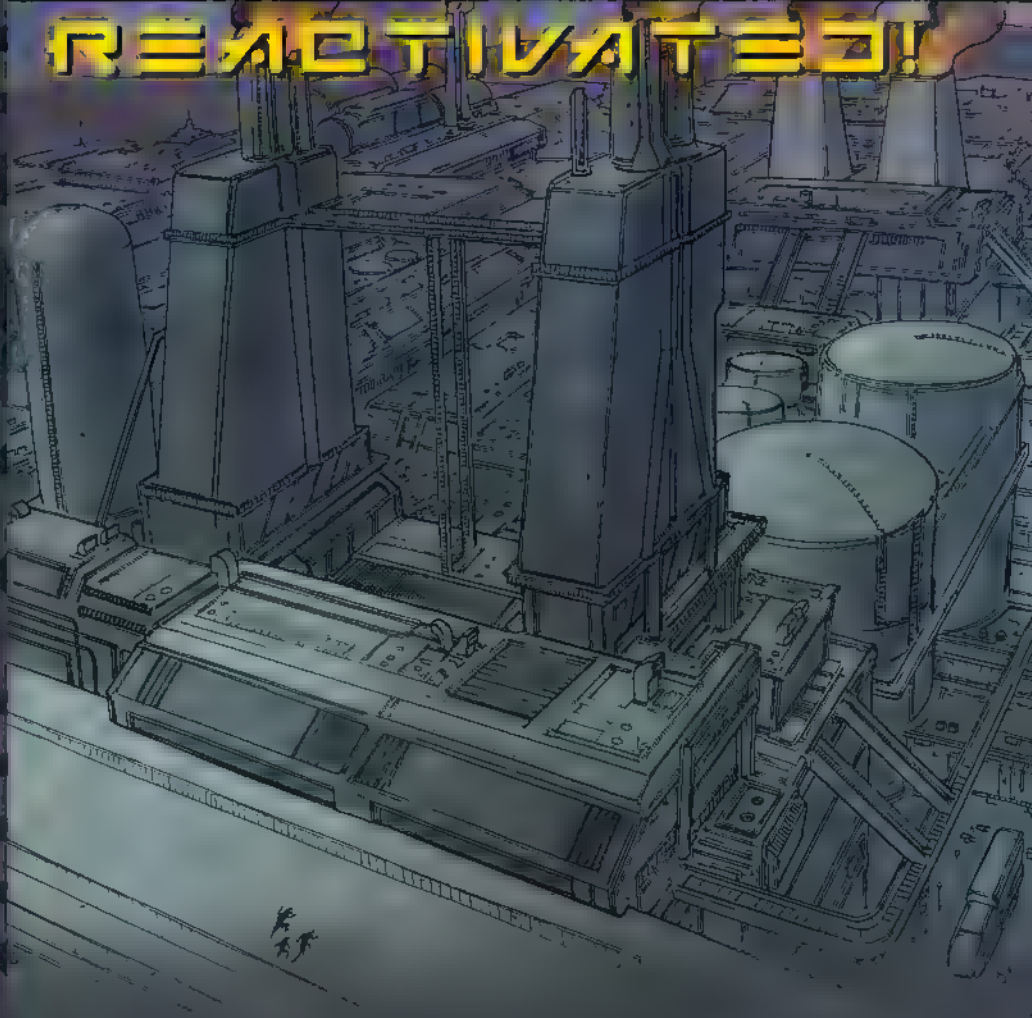


REACTIVATED!

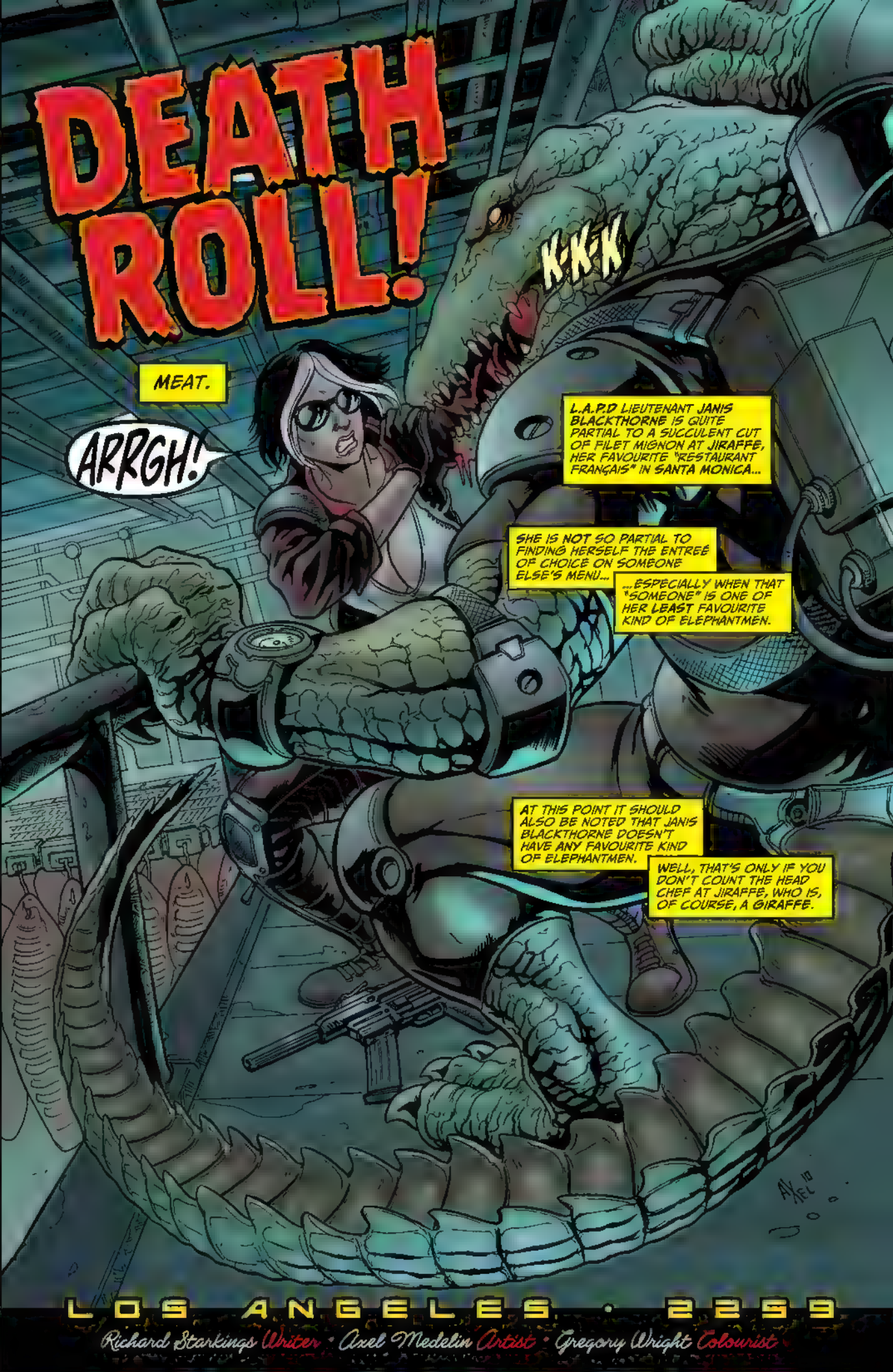


LAPD LIEUTENANT JANIS BLACKTHORNE HAS LED A STRIKE FORCE, INCLUDING HIP FLASK AND EBONY HIDE, TO THE SOURCE OF SIGNALS BELIEVED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH AN ATTEMPT BY MAPPO TO REACTIVATE HIP FLASK AS A WEAPON OF WAR!

FIVE ELEPHANTMEN – CROCS – HAVE INTERCEPTED BLACKTHORNE'S TEAM AND ARE NOW RUNNING LOOSE IN A CATTLE PROCESSING PLANT IN LOS ANGELES.

www.hipflask.com/elephantmen

e-mail your letters (and chocolate) to RICHARD@HIPFLASK.COM


DEATH ROLL!
K-K-K
MEAT.
ARRGH!
L.A.P.D LIEUTENANT JANIS BLACKTHORNE IS QUITE PARTIAL TO A SUCCULENT CUT OF FILET MIGNON AT JIRAFFE, HER FAVOURITE "RESTAURANT FRANÇAIS" IN SANTA MONICA...
SHE IS NOT SO PARTIAL TO FINDING HERSELF THE ENTREE OF CHOICE ON SOMEONE ELSE'S MENU...
...ESPECIALLY WHEN THAT "SOMEONE" IS ONE OF HER LEAST FAVOURITE KIND OF ELEPHANTMEN.
AT THIS POINT IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT JANIS BLACKTHORNE DOESN'T HAVE ANY FAVOURITE KIND OF ELEPHANTMEN.
WELL, THAT'S ONLY IF YOU DON'T COUNT THE HEAD CHEF AT JIRAFFE, WHO IS, OF COURSE, A GIRAFFE.
AXEL

LOS ANGELES · 2259

Richard Starkings Writer · Axel Medellin Artist · Gregory Wright Colourist

BLACKTHORNE!

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE INFORMATION AGENTS HIERONYMOUS "HIP" FLASK AND EBONY HIDE ATE ANIMAL FLESH.

THEY HAD BEEN RAISED BY THE MAPPO CORPORATION WITH A TASTE FOR MEAT, EVEN THOUGH HIPPOS AND ELEPHANTS WERE TRADITIONALLY KNOWN TO BE HERBIVORES...

MAPPO SCIENTISTS BELIEVED THAT MEAT EATERS MADE BETTER WARRIORS.

BETTER KILLERS.

MORE HUMAN.

CAUGHT BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA...

CROC'S GOING INTO A DEATHROLL...

CAN'T... GET MY ARM FREE!

BUT HE'S FORGOTTEN ONE IMPORTANT THING...

I STILL HAVE A GUN IN THAT HAND!

BRAKA BRAK

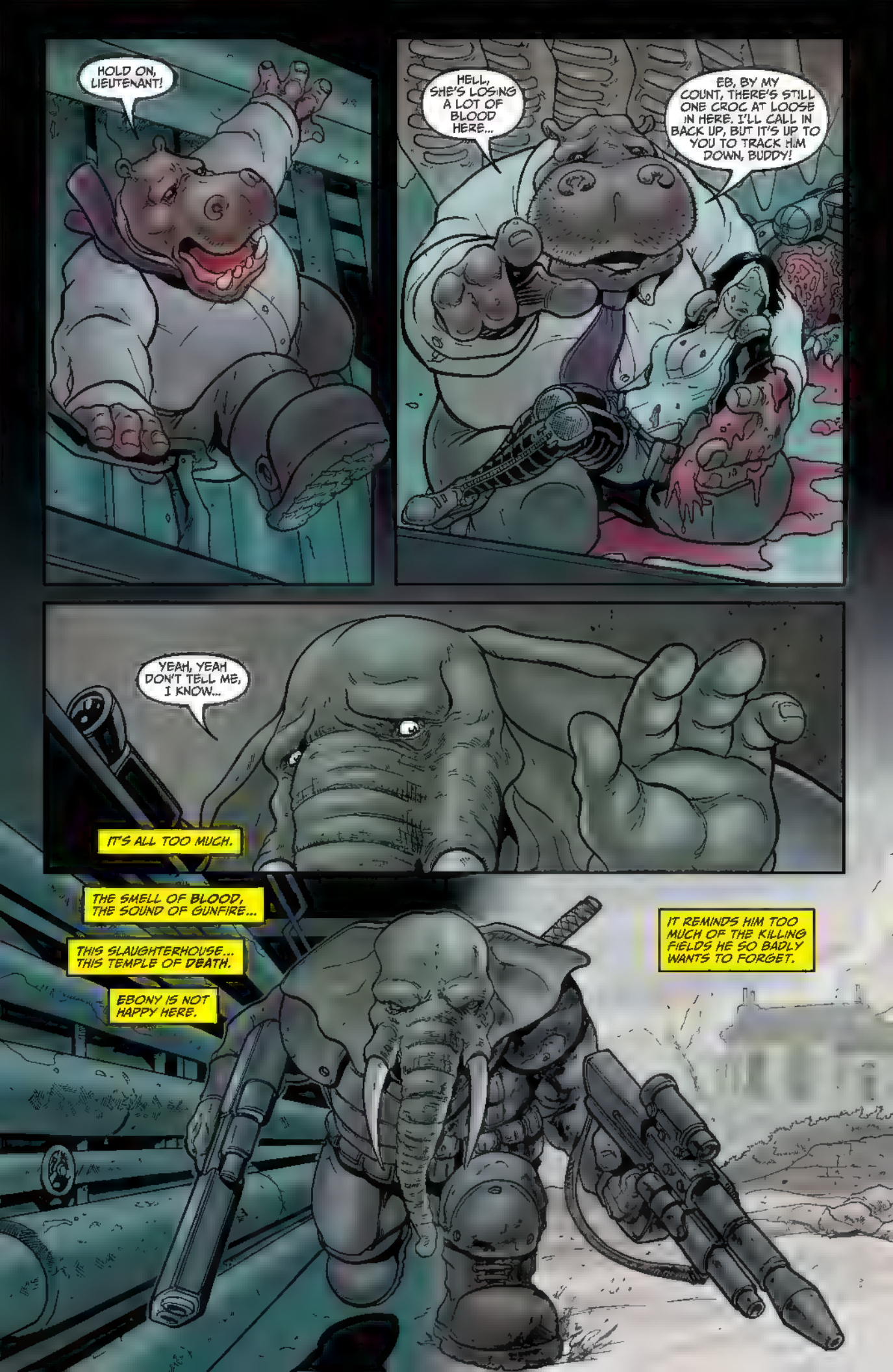
SPUTUTCH

KRADUNTCH

STAY STILL -- I'M COMING DOWN THERE!

'COURSE, I'LL BE ABLE TO MOVE BETTER WITHOUT THIS...

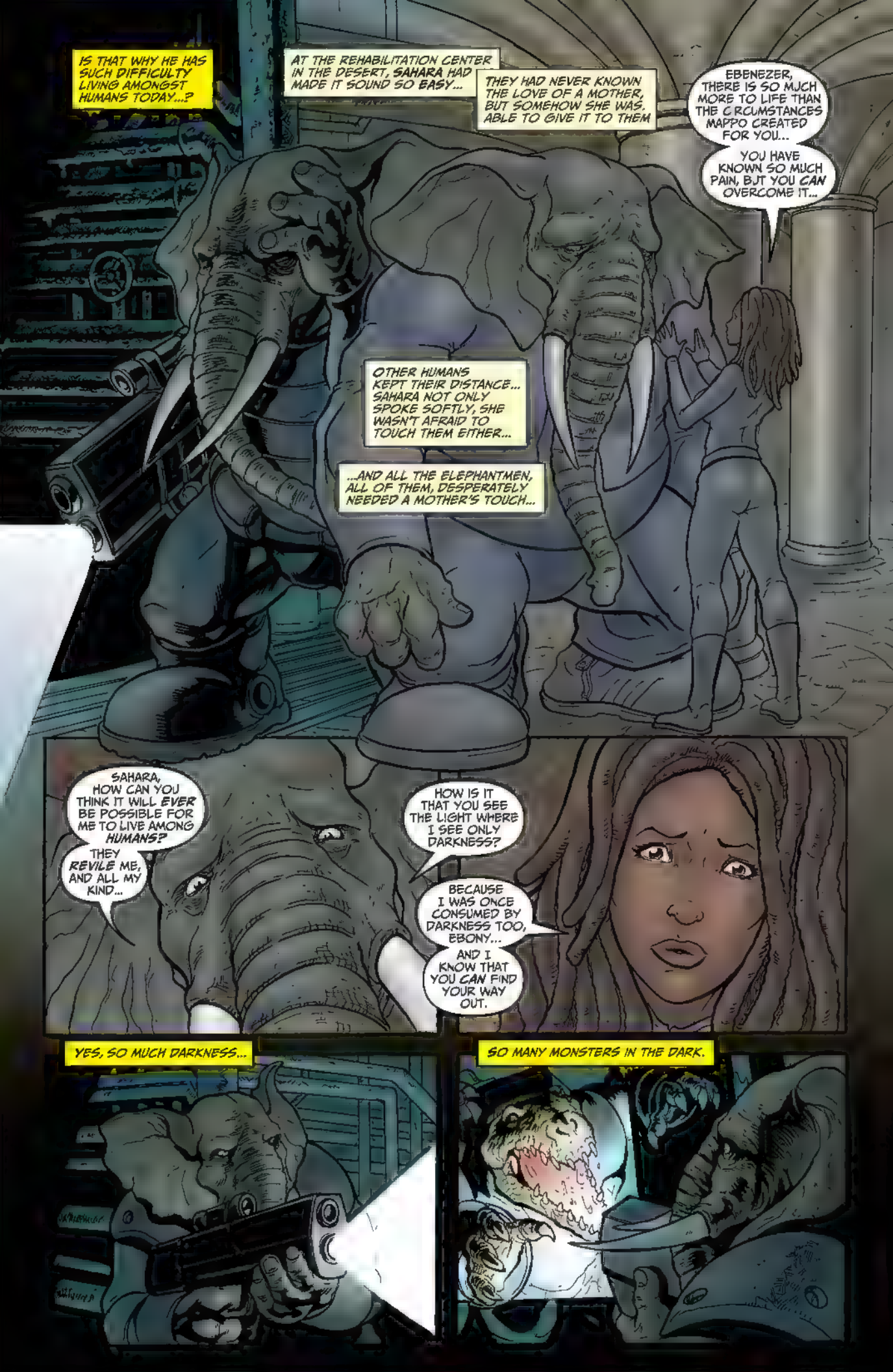
...GODDAMNED MONKEY SUIT!

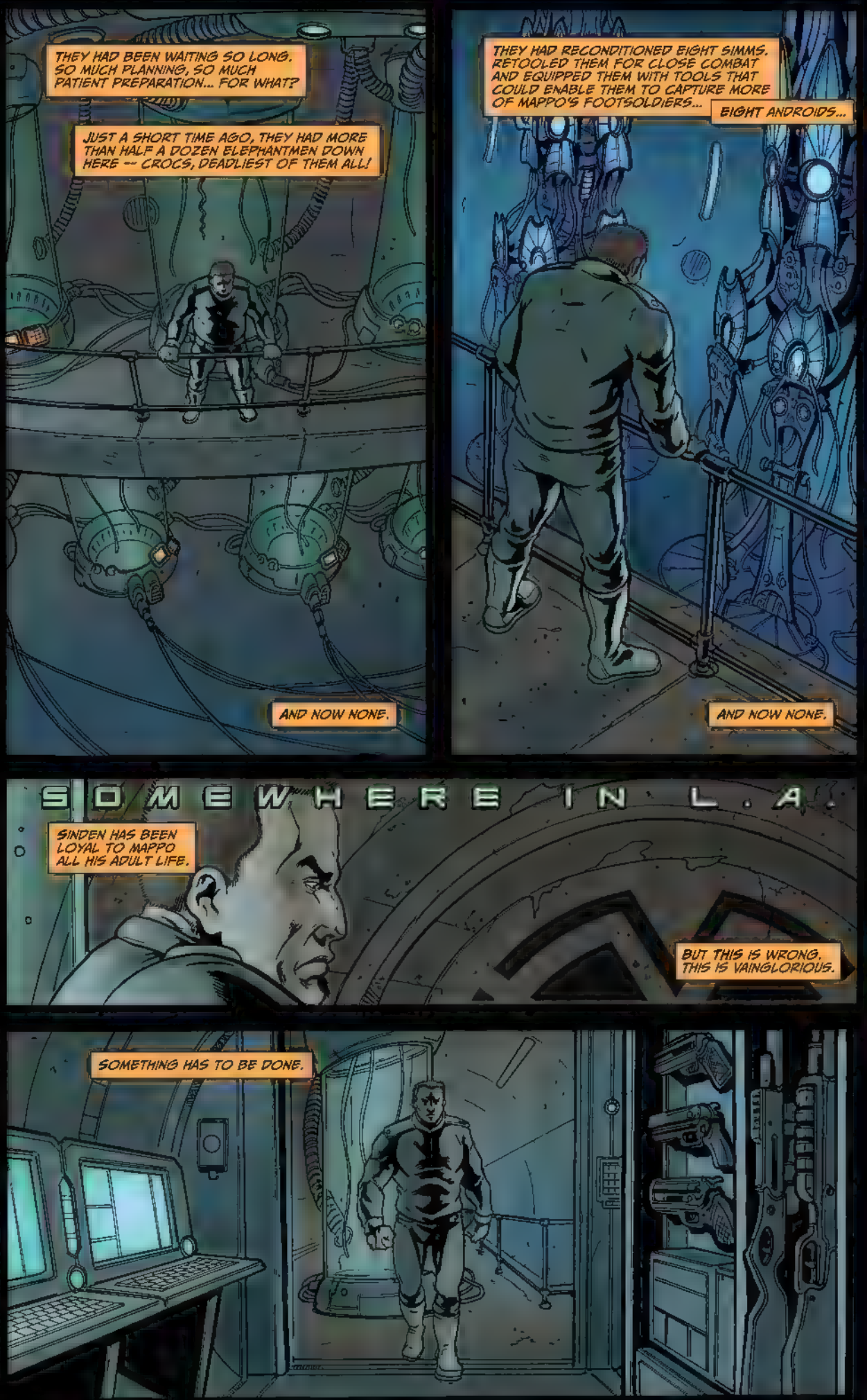

HOLD ON, LIEUTENANT!
HELL, SHE'S LOSING A LOT OF BLOOD HERE...
EB, BY MY COUNT, THERE'S STILL ONE CROC AT LOOSE IN HERE. I'LL CALL IN BACK UP, BUT IT'S UP TO YOU TO TRACK HIM DOWN, BUDDY!
YEAH, YEAH DON'T TELL ME, I KNOW...
IT'S ALL TOO MUCH.
THE SMELL OF BLOOD, THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE...
THIS SLAUGHTERHOUSE... THIS TEMPLE OF DEATH.
EBONY IS NOT HAPPY HERE.
IT REMINDS HIM TOO MUCH OF THE KILLING FIELDS HE SO BADLY WANTS TO FORGET.

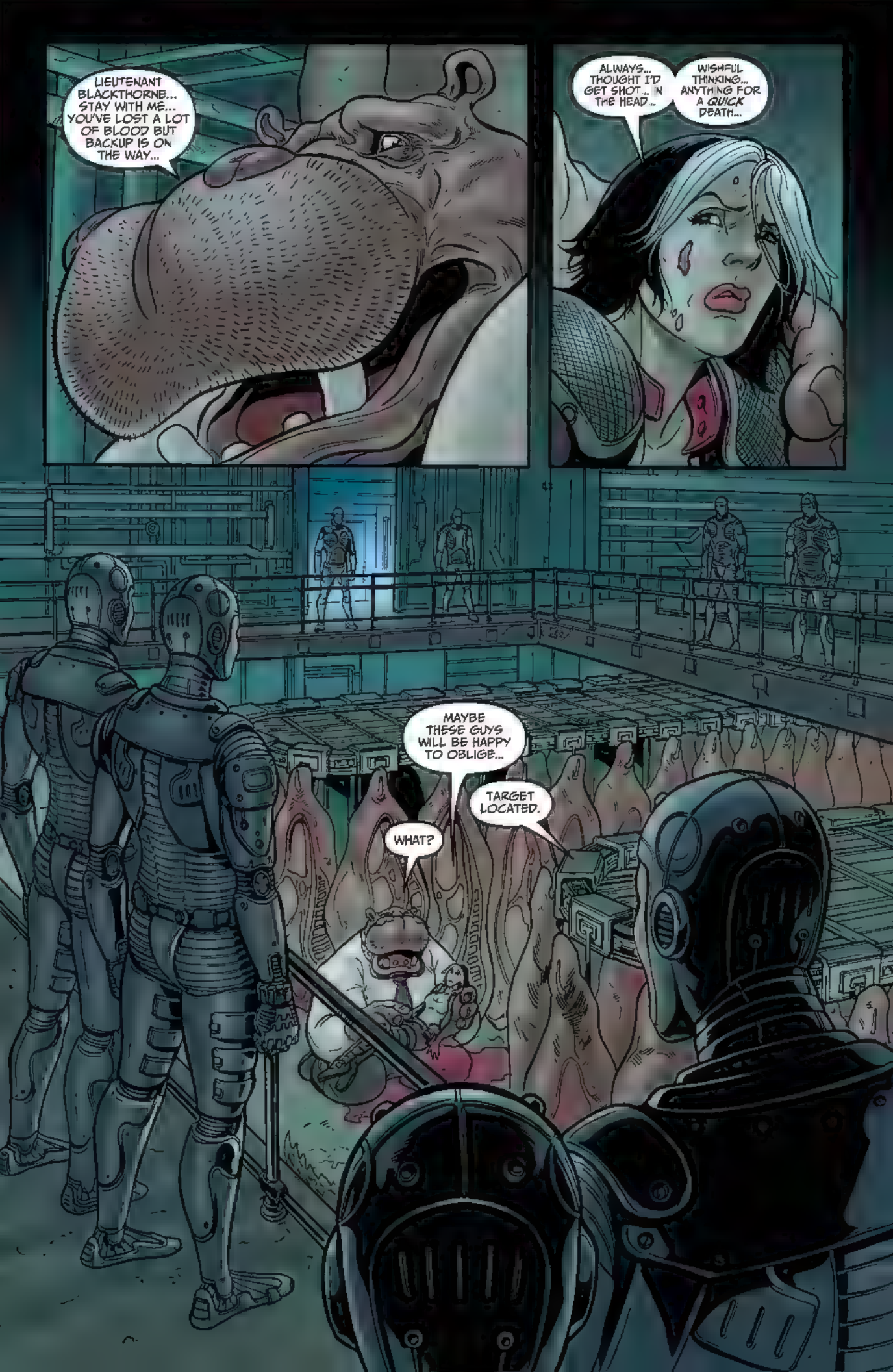
BUT FOR THE ELEPHANTMEN, THE PAST IS ALWAYS PRESENT.
SOUTHERN·FRANCE·2239
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
NON, S'IL VOUS PLAÎT ÉPARGNEZ NOTRE GARÇON
PRENEZ-MOI MAIS LAISSEZ-LE VIVRE
NON... NON. S'IL VOUS PLAIT. AYEZ PITIÉ DE NOS ÂMES !
K-K-K K-K-K
CHMP
MON DIEU... NON...
SPLTT

THAT IS ENOUGH...
PAPA!
YES, OUR MISSION HERE IS KILL OR BE KILLED...
BUT WE ARE NOT ANIMALS... WE ARE SOLDIERS!
THESE HUMANS DO NOT NEED TO SUFFER—
BLAM BLAM BLAM

SUFFERING. THE TRAINERS AT MAPPO HAD NOT TALKED TO THEM ABOUT SUFFERING.
BUT NOT TALKING ABOUT THIS, HUMAN, CONDITION DIDN'T ELIMINATE IT. EBONY HAD TO COME TO TERMS WITH IT ANYWAY.
HUMANS WERE CAPABLE OF SUCH MONSTROUS ACTS... JUST AS THEY'D BEEN TOLD...
YVETTE
GRRMF
IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE ANY UNEASE IN HIS HEART WAS REPLACED BY COLD HATRED...
AFTER ONLY A FEW DAYS IN EUROPE, EBONY FOUND THAT KILLING HUMANS WAS NO MORE DIFFICULT...
...THAN KILLING A DOG.
BLAM


IS THAT WHY HE HAS SUCH DIFFICULTY LIVING AMONGST HUMANS TODAY...?
AT THE REHABILITATION CENTER IN THE DESERT, SAHARA HAD MADE IT SOUND SO EASY...
THEY HAD NEVER KNOWN THE LOVE OF A MOTHER, BUT SOMEHOW SHE WAS. ABLE TO GIVE IT TO THEM
EBENEZER, THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO LIFE THAN THE CIRCUMSTANCES MAPPO CREATED FOR YOU...
YOU HAVE KNOWN SO MUCH PAIN, BUT YOU CAN OVERCOME IT...
OTHER HUMANS KEPT THEIR DISTANCE... SAHARA NOT ONLY SPOKE SOFTLY, SHE WASN'T AFRAID TO TOUCH THEM EITHER...
...AND ALL THE ELEPHANTMEN, ALL OF THEM, DESPERATELY NEEDED A MOTHER'S TOUCH...
SAHARA, HOW CAN YOU THINK IT WILL EVER BE POSSIBLE FOR ME TO LIVE AMONG HUMANS?
THEY REVILE ME, AND ALL MY KIND...
HOW IS IT THAT YOU SEE THE LIGHT WHERE I SEE ONLY DARKNESS?
BECAUSE I WAS ONCE CONSUMED BY DARKNESS TOO, EBONY...
AND I KNOW THAT YOU CAN FIND YOUR WAY OUT.
YES, SO MUCH DARKNESS...
SO MANY MONSTERS IN THE DARK.


THEY HAD BEEN WAITING SO LONG. SO MUCH PLANNING, SO MUCH PATIENT PREPARATION... FOR WHAT?
JUST A SHORT TIME AGO, THEY HAD MORE THAN HALF A DOZEN ELEPHANTMEN DOWN HERE -- CROCS, DEADLIEST OF THEM ALL!
AND NOW NONE.
THEY HAD RECONDITIONED EIGHT SIMMS. RETOOLED THEM FOR CLOSE COMBAT AND EQUIPPED THEM WITH TOOLS THAT COULD ENABLE THEM TO CAPTURE MORE OF MAPPO'S FOOTSOLDIERS...
EIGHT ANDROIDS...
AND NOW NONE.
SOMEWHERE IN L.A.
SINDEN HAS BEEN LOYAL TO MAPPO ALL HIS ADULT LIFE.
BUT THIS IS WRONG. THIS IS VAINGLORIOUS.
SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE.

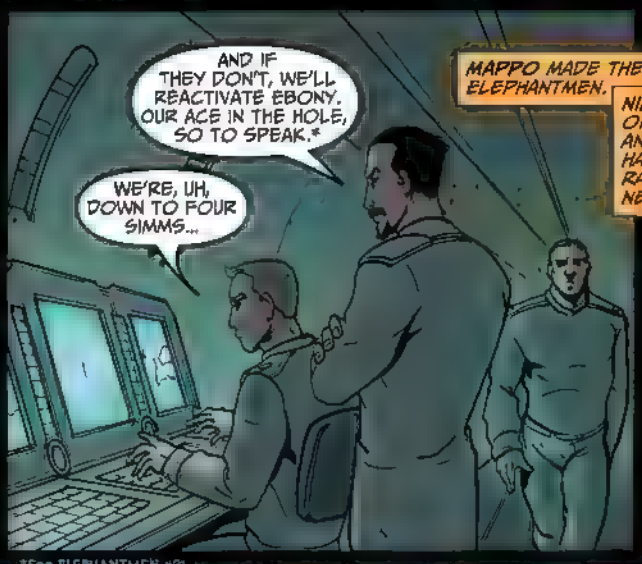

LIEUTENANT BLACKTHORNE... STAY WITH ME... YOU'VE LOST A LOT OF BLOOD BUT BACKUP IS ON THE WAY...
ALWAYS... THOUGHT I'D GET SHOT... IN THE HEAD...
WISHFUL THINKING... ANYTHING FOR A QUICK DEATH...
MAYBE THESE GUYS WILL BE HAPPY TO OBLIGE...
TARGET LOCATED.
WHAT?

SIMMS...
ACQUISITION IMMINENT.
FSHHHT
SYNTHETIC HUMAN BEINGS, ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO GIVE PLEASURE TO REAL HUMAN BEINGS...
HUH?!?
SOME OF THE SIMMS' MORE ESOTERIC FEATURES HAVE BEEN REPURPOSED SO THAT THEY CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY COMPLETE THEIR NEW MISSION FOR MAPPO -- THE REACTIVATION OF THE ELEPHANTMEN AS WEAPONS OF WAR...*
*See ELEPHANTMEN #23 & 24
FSHHHT
FSHHHT
FSH
FSH
FSHHHT
WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE GOOD MJD--?
UHHH... WHY DOES THAT FEEL KIND OF NICE?
THWIP
ZZT
THWIP
ZZT
THWIP
ZZT
THWIP
THWIP
THWIP
VANITY CASE RECENTLY STARED INTO THE DEAD EYES OF ONE THESE SIMM ROBOTS AS IT LAY ON A SLAB AT THE INFORMATION AGENCY...*
*See ELEPHANTMEN #26

24 HOURS AGO...
LIEUTENANT BLACKTHORNE?
WELCOME TO THE AGENCY...
LOOKING INTO THOSE EYES, VANITY REALIZED SHE HAD RECENTLY BEEN SEDUCED BY AN IDENTICAL SIMM...*
OOF!
*See ELEPHANTMEN #22 & 23
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, GIRLY..
I'M SO SORRY...
I-- UH... NO... NONO...
HEY, ARE YOU OKAY...?
AS FAR AS SHE KNOWS, THAT SIMM IS STILL OUT THERE SOMEWHERE...
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST!
..BUT, SURELY, NOT HERE... NOT AT THE INFORMATION AGENCY ITSELF...
IT MUST BE THE DRUG HE SECRETED INTO HER BLOOD... SHE HAS TO BE... SEEING THINGS...
SHE JUST HAS TO GET HOME... SLEEP IT OFF...
NO-ONE NEED KNOW.
WHAT WAS SPOOKING HER?
SHE'S JUST A KID; WORKS WITH AGENT FLASK...
HMP.
WELL, THAT'S WHO I'M HERE FOR -- WHERE'S GRUENWALD'S OFFICE?
OH, BUT TAKE ME TO YOUR ARMORY FIRST.

D'YA THINK GETTING ME ALL TINGLY MEANS YOU'RE GONNA GET YOUR WICKED WAY WITH ME...?
HELL, NO! YOU FREAKIN' ROBOTS HAD YOUR CHANCE...
SMASH
MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU WANT SOME...
YOU'LL START WITH A KISS...
BEFORE YOU TRY TO STICK THAT IN!

YOU WANNA KNOW A SECRET, FACEACHE?
WHNTCH
THTUNK
THE REST OF US -- THE HIPPOS, THE RHINOS...?
EVEN THE GODDAMNED HYENAS...
KRTNCH
WE NEVER LIKED YOU!
STONGH



*See ELEPHANTMEN #21

MAPPO MADE THE ELEPHANTMEN.
NIKKEN'S ELITE TEAM OF BIOENGINEERS AND DNA EXPERTS HAD CREATED A NEW RACE OF CREATURES NEVER SEEN BEFORE.*
IS THIS WHAT MAPPO HAS COME TO...?

*See ELEPHANTMEN #0

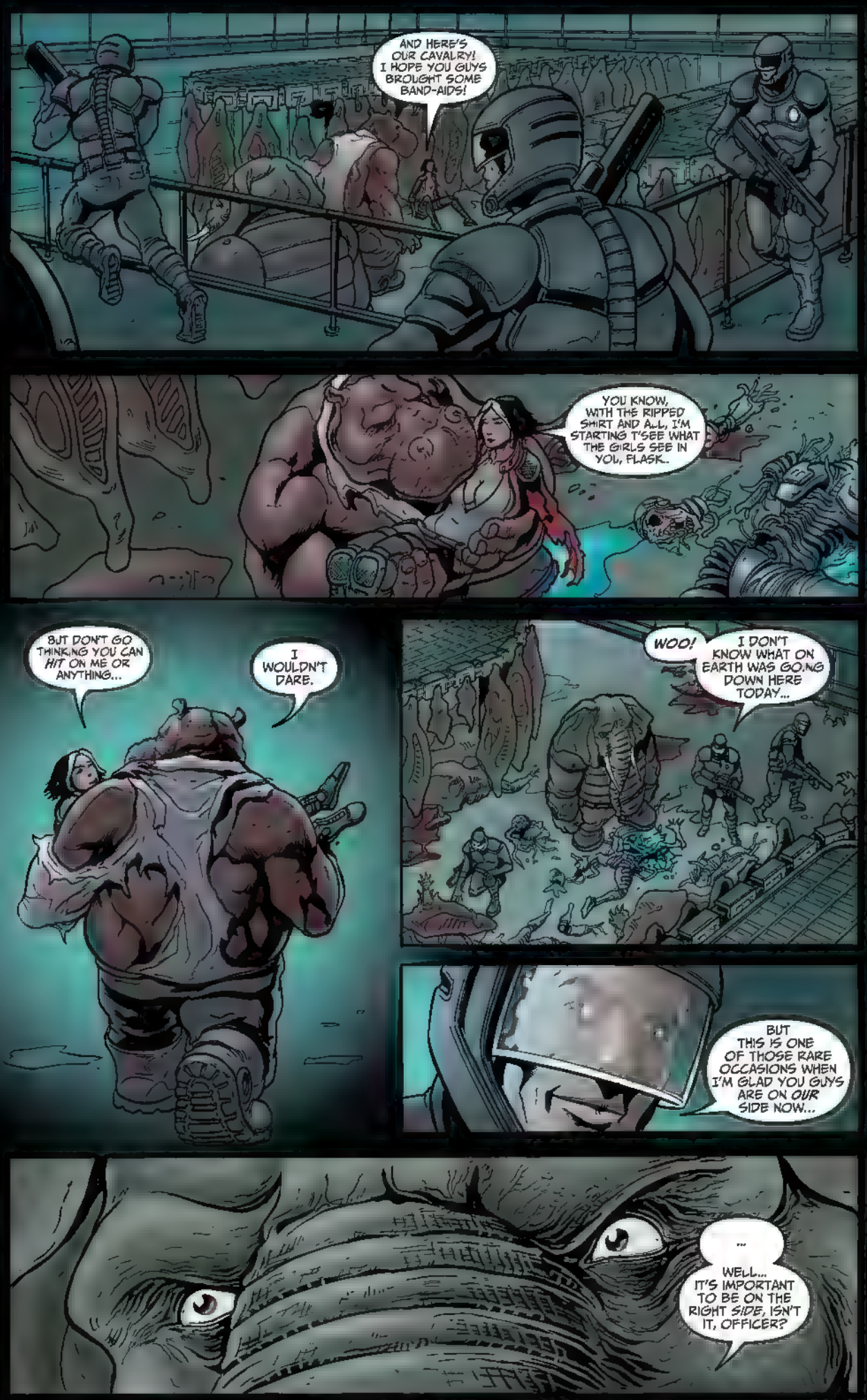
THREE FOOLISH MEN SKULKING AROUND IN UNDERGROUND TUNNELS TRYING TO RECAPTURE A FRAGMENT OF NIKKEN'S PAST GLORIES?
TWO SIMMS...
THEY NEED HELP...

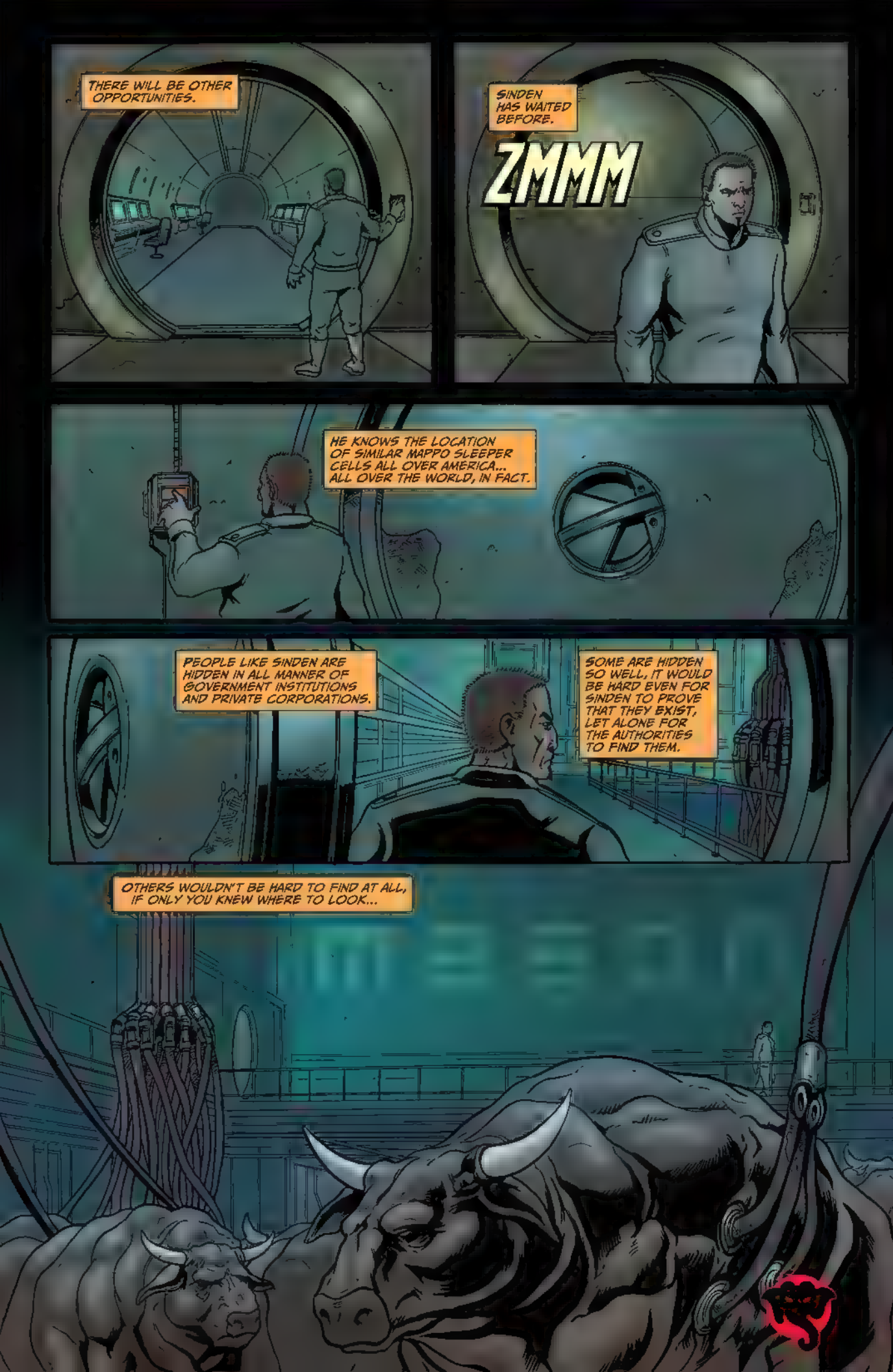
WHAT WAS IT NIKKEN HAD SAID ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...?
THIS IS A NEW BEGINNING!
IS THIS A BEGINNING?
WOULD NIKKEN APPROVE OF THIS SHODDY OPERATION?

NO. OF COURSE NOT. THIS HAS TO END.
REACTIVATE EBONY'S IMPERIUMITE --- NOW.
THAT ORDER IS COUNTERMANDED, KRYTEN... STEP AWAY FROM THE CONSOLE...
I WILL DO NO SUCH THING -- HAVE YOU TAKEN LEAVE OF YOUR SENSES, SINDEN?!
IGNORE HIM! ACTIVATE EBONY!
IT'S OVER, KRYTEN! AND I WILL K.I.L YOU IF YOU DON'T DO AS I SAY
NO! MAPPO MUST PREV--
NO ARGUMENT THERE... MAPPO WILL PREVAIL.
BLAM BLAM
BUT NOT HERE. NOT NOW.

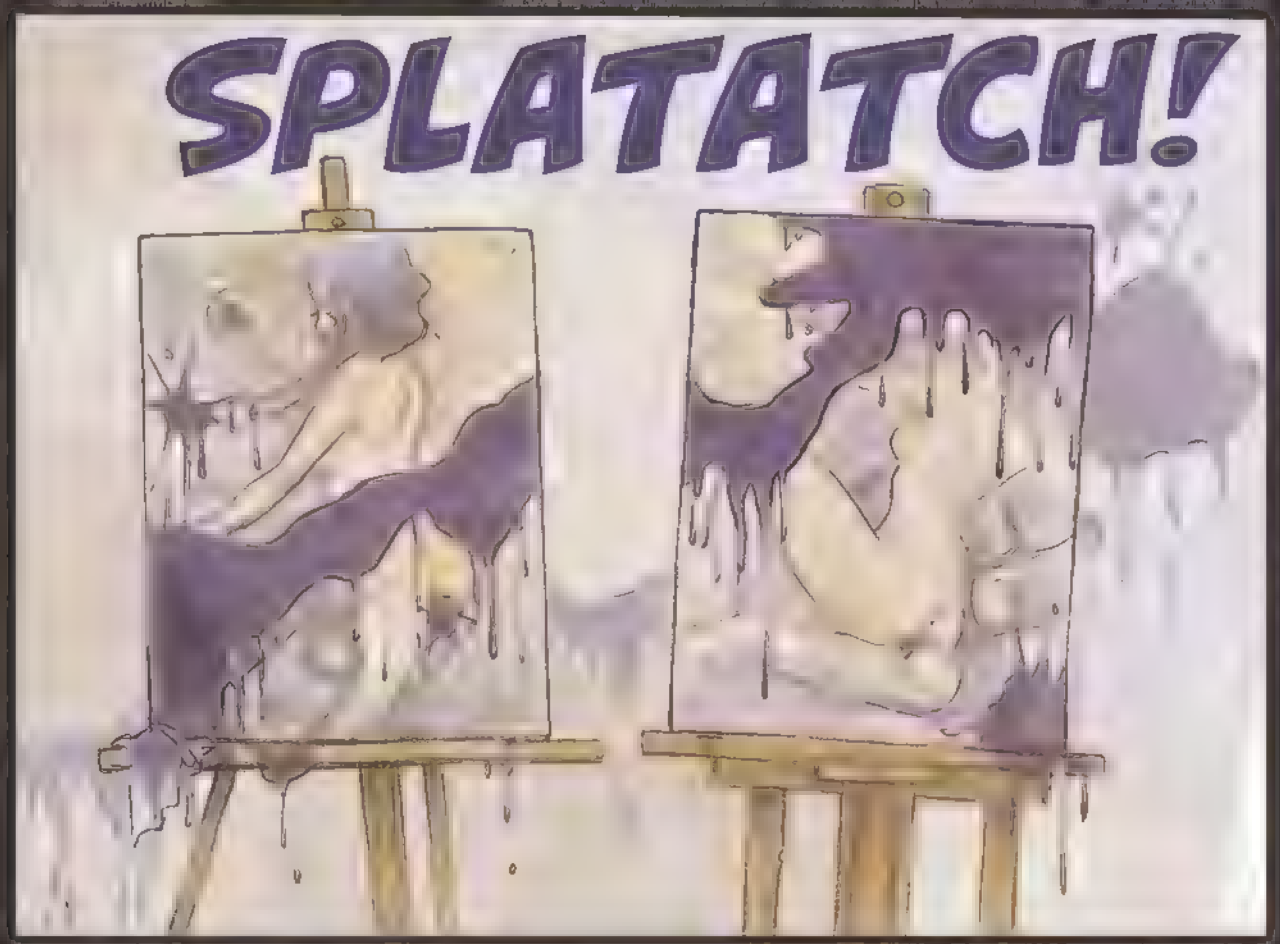
UNH... KINKY. I GUESS YOU DO KNOW HOW TO GET A GIRL'S ATTENTION AFTER ALL...
AHH... YEAH, I KNOW HOW THIS GOES...
BRAKABRAK
DON'T YOU... HATE THOSE GRABBY GUYS...?
NICE, BUT THAT DOESN'T HELP ME WITH BONDAGE BOY HERE--

WARAGH!
EB?
KRAK!
HEY, THANKS, PAL...
ARE YOU OKAY, EB?
YEAH... I'M OKAY.


AND HERE'S OUR CAVALRY! I HOPE YOU GUYS BROUGHT SOME BAND-AIDS!
YOU KNOW, WITH THE RIPPED SHIRT AND ALL, I'M STARTING T'SEE WHAT THE GIRLS SEE IN YOU, FLASK..
BUT DON'T GO THINKING YOU CAN HIT ON ME OR ANYTHING...
I WOULDN'T DARE.
WOO!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT ON EARTH WAS GO.NG DOWN HERE TODAY...
BUT THIS IS ONE OF THOSE RARE OCCASIONS WHEN I'M GLAD YOU GUYS ARE ON OUR SIDE NOW...
...
WELL... IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE ON THE RIGHT SIDE, ISN'T IT, OFFICER?


THERE WILL BE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES.
SINDEN HAS WAITED BEFORE.
ZMMM
HE KNOWS THE LOCATION OF SIMILAR MAPPO SLEEPER CELLS ALL OVER AMERICA... ALL OVER THE WORLD, IN FACT.
PEOPLE LIKE SINDEN ARE HIDDEN IN ALL MANNER OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE CORPORATIONS.
SOME ARE HIDDEN SO WELL, IT WOULD BE HARD EVEN FOR SINDEN TO PROVE THAT THEY EXIST, LET ALONE FOR THE AUTHORITIES TO FIND THEM.
OTHERS WOULDN'T BE HARD TO FIND AT ALL, IF ONLY YOU KNEW WHERE TO LOOK...

SANTA MONICA
HIROMI KIYOKO, MIKI TO HER FRIENDS, SOMETIMES RUES THE DAY SHE FOUND HIP FLASK AT THE SIDE OF THE L.A RIVER, BLEEDING TO DEATH...*
SCREW YOU!
IF ONLY SHE'D FOUND A FARE THAT NIGHT... IF ONLY SHE'D NOT LET HER CURIOSITY GET THE BETTER OF HER THE NEXT DAY... IF ONLY SHE WASN'T SUCH A FREAKING SAP!
MAYBE THEN, TINY, HER FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE AT THE TAXI RANK, WOULDN'T BE LYING IN A COMA RIGHT NOW!*
SCREW THE WHOLE FREAKING LOT OF YOU!


SPLATCH!

MAYBE THEN SHE WOULDN'T BE HURTING SO MUCH RIGHT NOW...
I HATE YOU!
I
HATE
YOU
I HATE YOU...

MIKI?
MAMA?
SHHH... CALM DOWN, SWEETIE...
SHHH... WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S THE MATTER? IS IT TINY? IS HE...
OH
AH...
OH, MIKI, YOU'RE SUCH A SILLY THING...
BUT I KNEW YOU'D SEE SENSE.
NO NEED FOR YOU TO CHASE AFTER THAT MONSTER ANY MORE NOW...
To Be Continued

ANIMAL WRITES

Write to richard@hipflask.com or post on our boards @ hipflask.com and imagecomics.com

Richard!

I wonder if there will be any female creature like the male ones in the comics? All the anthropomorphics are males.

I was also wondering, besides Obadiah and Sahara as a couple, will there be others eventually like them? for example a crocodile who befriends a human and the two start a relationship. (I think the crocodile creatures in the comics are cool.) The two like each other, but he is worried about his feral side and harming her, but she won't quit on him.

Milagros Draper

No, Milagros, no female Elephantmen, not now and not ever -- MAPPO bred males to capitalize on aggressive male tendencies. As for relationships between our elephantmen and humans, well many of your concerns will be addressed in issue #30 and beyond.

Hey Rich,

Mark here from Facebook. Just thought I'd share with you that Hip Flask piece I posted over there. Hope you enjoy my take on your wonderful creation, I'm actually planning on continuing with Ebony and Obadiah. Even Trench (love him a lot)... I can see how Ladrönn, Moritat, Boo and all the other amazing artists you've collaborated with come up with such amazing + powerful images of Elephantmen... it's because they're so much joy to draw, and are nothing like the norm. So right there, you've got the perfect ingredient for one of the most fresh and engrossing books in comics.

Congratulations on getting the property optioned for film. Given the positive responses so far on your thread, this will be a very fun journey to follow. Thanks for bringing such a diverse and fresh creation, it's a great read for people who're tired of all the big company crossovers that's become the norm – they're not even special events anymore. For someone who likes the more non-spandex, varied and thought-provoking stuff, I thank you and I've been promoting the book here in the Philippines.

Much thanks, keep up the great work, Rich. Best of success and good health to you and everyone at Comicraft! Much respect,

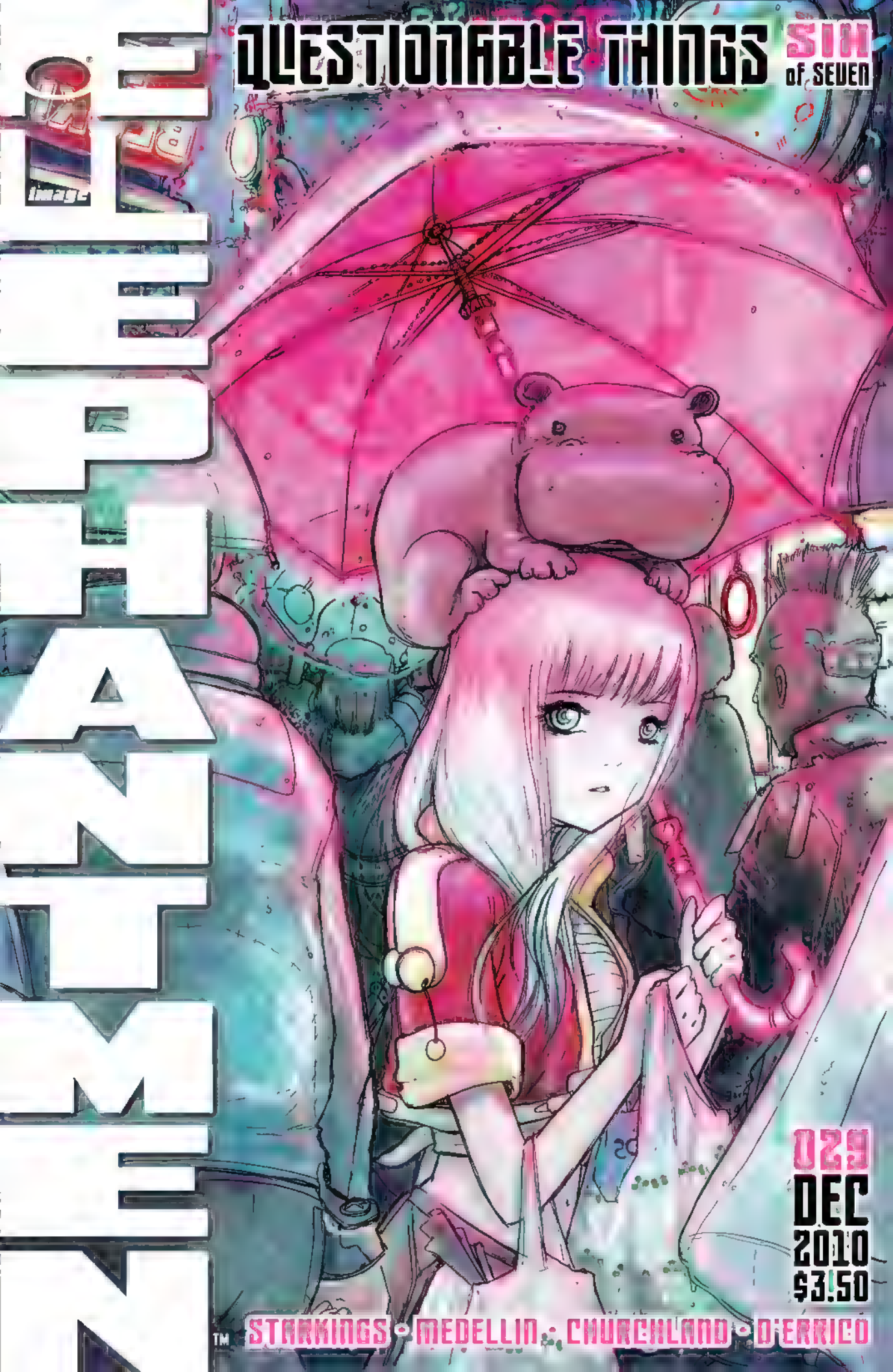
Mark
Manila, Philippines

Thank YOU, Mark! Hope you don't mind our running your piece right here...

INTRODUCING OUR GUEST COVER ARTIST

Steve Skroce

Perhaps best known for his work on THE MATRIX, I got to know superstar artist Steve Skroce when he co-created X-MAN with honorary Elephantman, JEPH LOEB. So when Steve came to us needing a logo for his DOC FRANKENSTEIN comic book with the Wachowskis, we were happy to oblige - and he readily provided us with the cover that adorns this issue in fair exchange. Scour the internet for copies of DOC, which has yet to be collected in trade paperback!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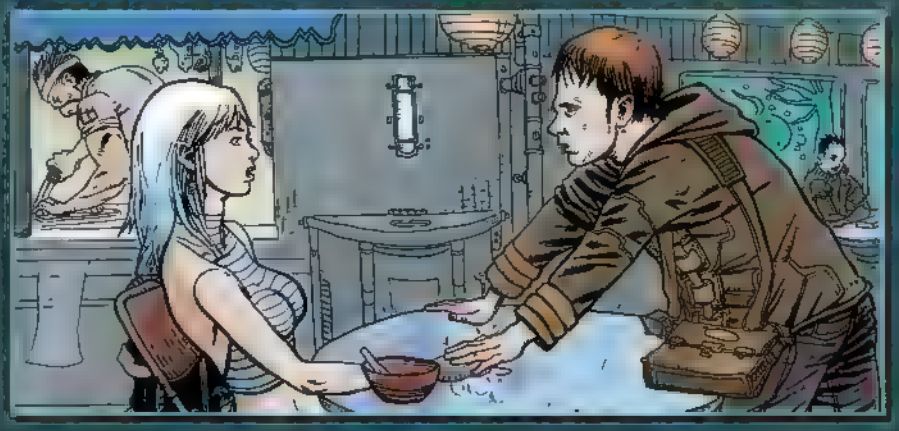
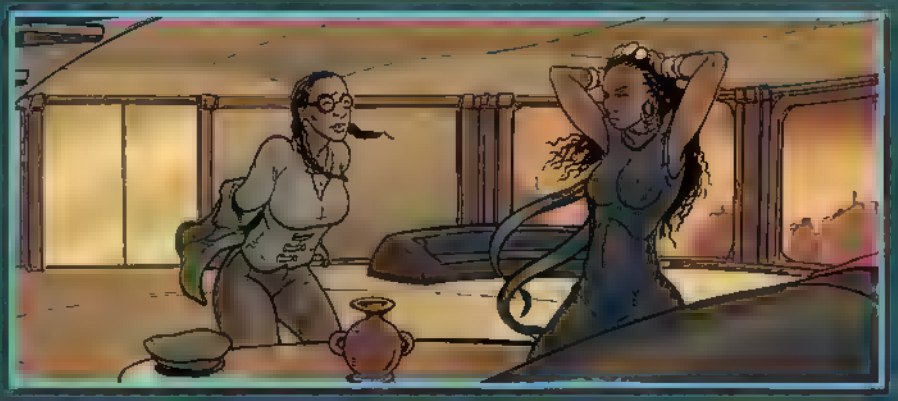
LADIES' NIGHT!

DISTRESSED BY HER ENCOUNTER WITH A SIMM ANDROID, VANITY CASE HAS TAKEN A DAY OF LEAVE FROM THE INFORMATION AGENCY.



EQUALLY DISTURBED BY HER ENCOUNTER WITH A SECOND SIMM ANDROID THAT CAUSED HIP FLASK TO INJURE HER COLLEAGUE TINY, MIMI HAS BEEN KEEPING HER DISTANCE FROM HIP AND EBONY.

WHILE HORN HAS BEEN ABSENT FROM IVORY TOWERS, SAHARA HAS BROUGHT IN HER DOUBLE, PANYA, SO THAT SHE CAN GET OUT INTO THE CITY FOR A CHANGE...



BUT THE ELEPHANTMEN ARE SUCH AN INTEGRAL PART OF ALL THESE WOMEN'S LIVES... IT SEEMS THAT NEITHER VANITY NOR MIMI – OR EVEN SAHARA – ARE AS SAFE AS THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE...

www.hipflask.com/elephantmen

e-mail your letters (and chocolate!) to RICHARD@HIPFLASK.COM

ACTIVE IMAGE

COMICRAFT

RICHARD STARKINGS
President & First Tiger

JOHN 'JG' ROSHELL
Secret Weapon

SANTIAGO PEREZ
Wrangler

Special Thanks to
MONIFA DANCES
Belly Dance Consultant

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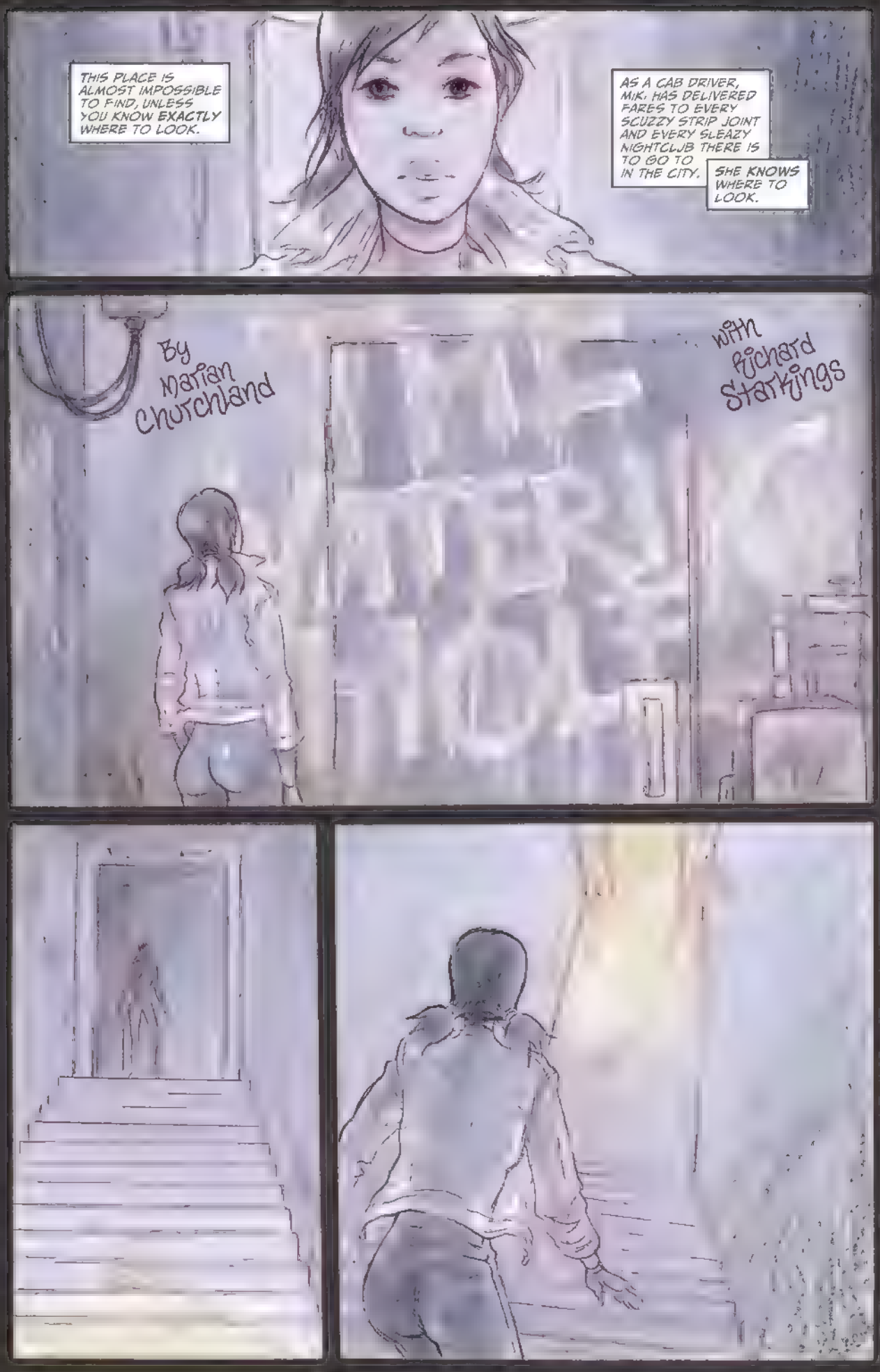
VENICE BEACH 2259
GRUENWALD WAS RIGHT, VANITY CASE HAS HAD A TOUGH TIME OF IT THESE PAST FEW DAYS...
BUT IT WILL ALL GO AWAY SOON....
THE HEADACHES... THE FLASHBACKS THE NAUSEA...
THE... TINGLING...
THAT'S THE WORST PART... WHEN SHE THINKS ABOUT SIMM...
WHEN SHE REMEMBERS... KISSING HIM...*
SHE STARTS FEELING... EXCITED..
THEN THE NAUSEA KICKS IN ALL OVER AGAIN.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #22 & 23

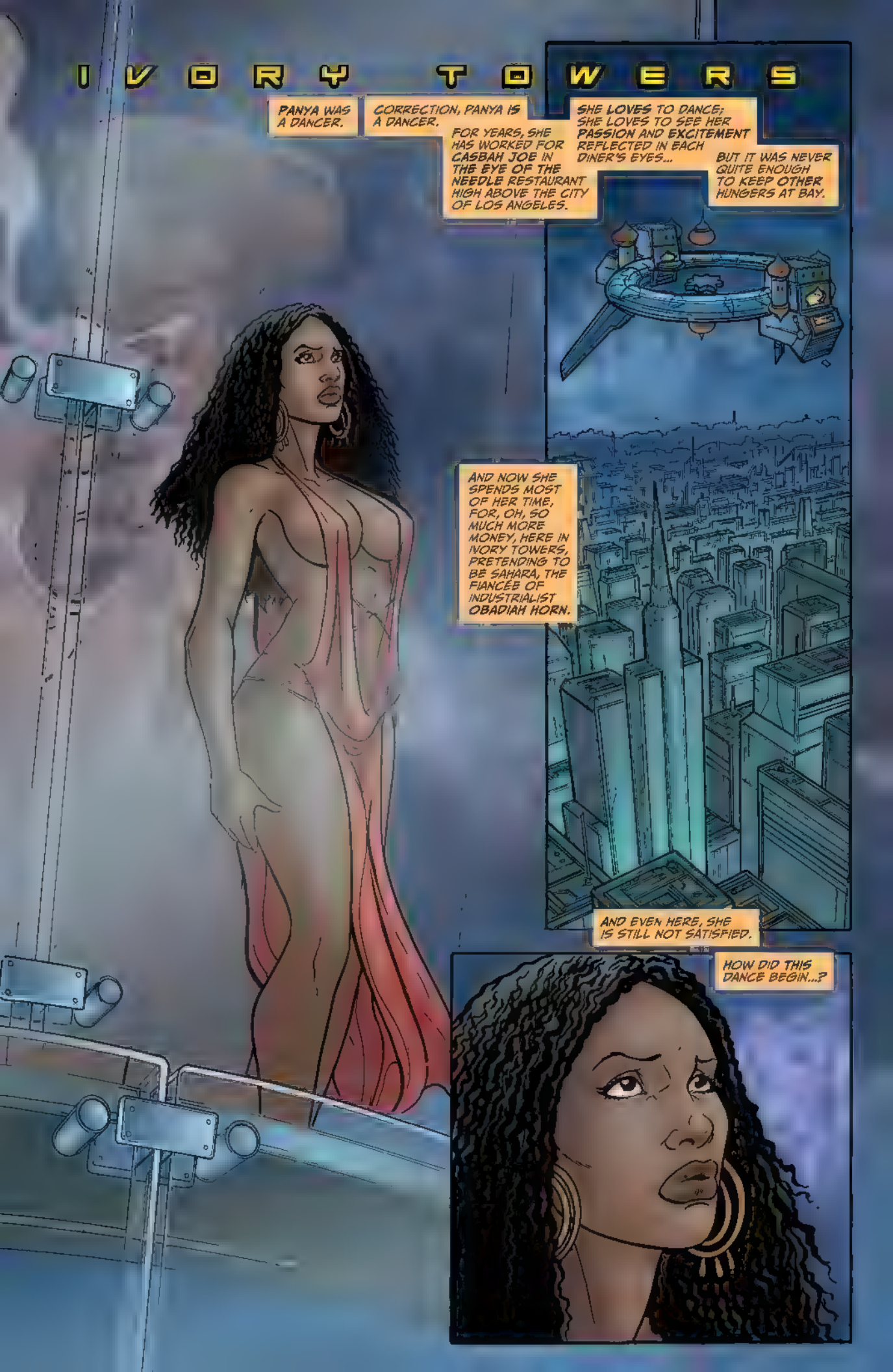
WORSE THINGS

SHE'S JUST HALLUCINATING.

DOWNTOWN LA • 2259
MIKI WOULD HAVE GONE STRAIGHT HOME... IF SHE HADN'T ARGUED WITH HER MOM.
SHE'D BEEN ON MIKI'S CASE ALL WEEK, AND IS THE KIND OF MOTHER WHO WILL WAIT UP UNTIL 4A.M JUST TO GET THE LAST WORD IN... EVEN IF SHE HAS TO PAY FOR IT THE NEXT DAY BY LOOKING LIKE CRAP FROM LACK OF SLEEP
ACTUALLY, MIKI'S MOM NEVER LOOKS LIKE CRAP, AND SHE MAKES SURE MIKI KNOWS IT.
USUALLY, AFTER WORK, HIROMI KIYOKO STAYS FOR A DRINK AT THE REDAN. TONIGHT SHE TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE PLACE... AT THE SMILING BARTENDER AND THE WELL-LIT BOOTHS PACKED WITH PEOPLE, DESPITE THE HOUR... TURNED AND LEFT.
SHE MIGHT HAVE MET A NICE YOUNG MAN -- WELL, OKAY, MAYBE NOT SO NICE -- AND THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN BETTER SHE'D AVOID HER MOM FOR THE NIGHT AND PISS HER OFF. INSTEAD, SHE GOT BACK INTO HER CAB, AND HERE SHE IS
LOOKING FOR ELEPHANTMEN.


THIS PLACE IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND, UNLESS YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO LOOK.
AS A CAB DRIVER, MIKI HAS DELIVERED FARES TO EVERY SCUZZY STRIP JOINT AND EVERY SLEAZY NIGHTCLUB THERE IS TO GO TO IN THE CITY.
SHE KNOWS WHERE TO LOOK.
By Marian Churchland
with Richard Starkings

...RELATIVES OF CUSSICK AND BAUER ARE STILL NOT HAPPY WITH THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION
A RECENT INQUEST INTO THE CRASH REPORTED DEATH BY MISADVENTURE
HIP?
HUH?
OH!


IVORY TOWERS
PANYA WAS A DANCER.
CORRECTION, PANYA IS A DANCER.
SHE LOVES TO DANCE; SHE LOVES TO SEE HER PASSION AND EXCITEMENT REFLECTED IN EACH DINER'S EYES...
FOR YEARS, SHE HAS WORKED FOR CASBAH JOE IN THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE RESTAURANT HIGH ABOVE THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES.
BUT IT WAS NEVER QUITE ENOUGH TO KEEP OTHER HUNGERS AT BAY.
AND NOW SHE SPENDS MOST OF HER TIME, FOR, OH, SO MUCH MORE MONEY, HERE IN IVORY TOWERS, PRETENDING TO BE SAHARA, THE FIANCÉE OF INDUSTRIALIST OBADIAH HORN.
AND EVEN HERE, SHE IS STILL NOT SATISFIED.
HOW DID THIS DANCE BEGIN...?

HOW LONG AGO NOW DID SAHARA APPROACH HER?
HOW DID PANYA SO READILY GIVE UP THAT LIFE...?
WHEN SHE DANCED, SHE FELT SO ALIVE!
WHO WOULD THINK THAT SHE WANTED FOR ANYTHING ELSE?

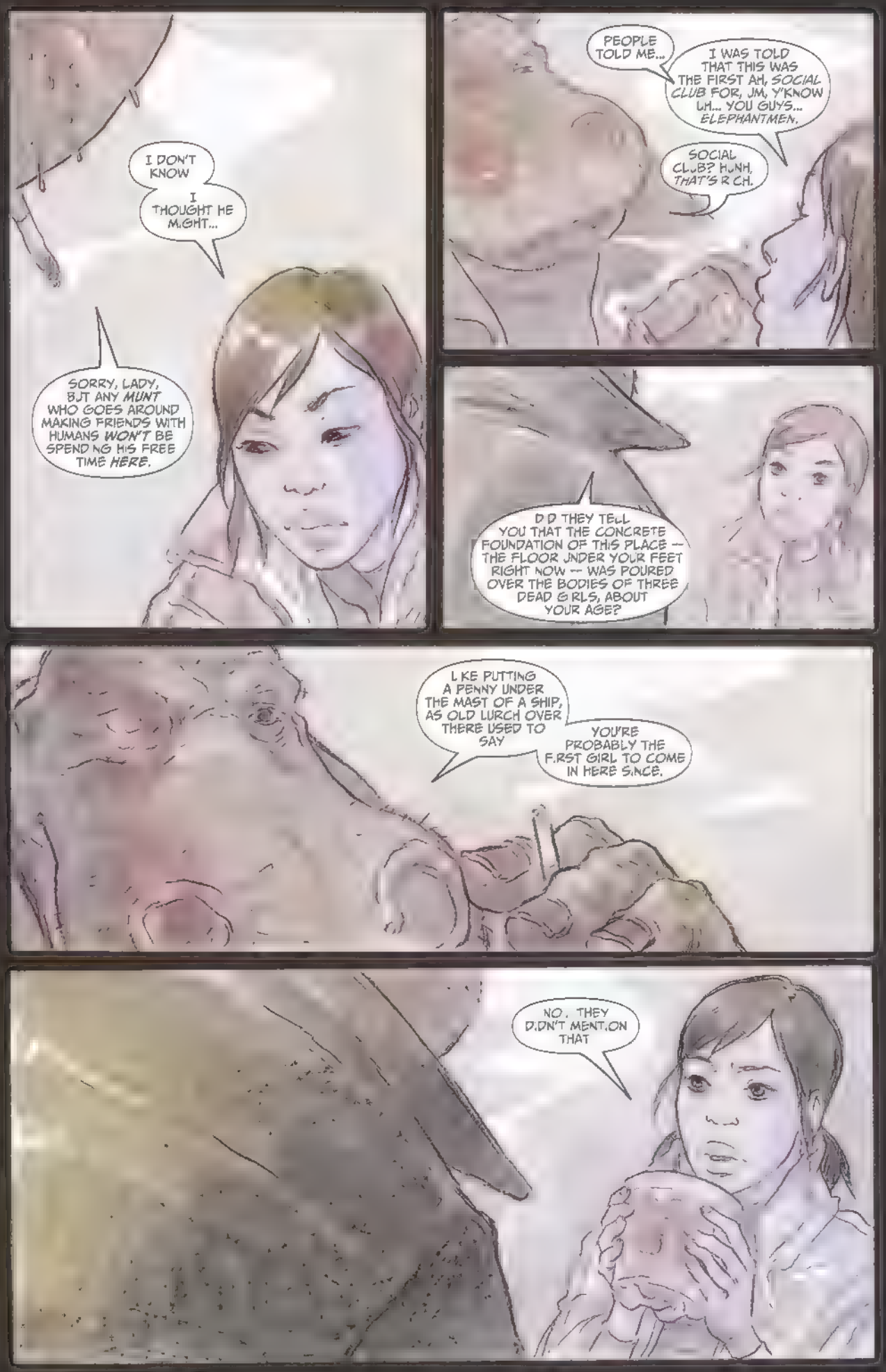
IT'S AMAZING. SHE LOOKS JUST LIKE YOU.
NOT ONLY HER SMILE OR HER BODY... SHE HAS THE SAME ENERGY AS YOU...
ARE YOU SO EASILY FOOLED, MY LOVE?
OF COURSE NOT, NO ONE ELSE COULD HAVE YOUR HEART, SAHARA...
WAITER...
THIS WAS WHEN IT STARTED...
THIS WAS THE MOMENT SAHARA STARTED TO CRAVE HER FREEDOM, AND SAW HOW SHE MIGHT RECLAIM IT...
THIS WAS THE MOMENT PANYA STARTED TO CRAVE SOMETHING MORE AND DARED TO BELIEVE THAT SHE MIGHT GET IT...

HOME. IN JUST A FEW SECONDS, VANITY CAN CLOSE THE DOOR, MAKE HERSELF A BOWL OF SOUP AND SLEEP THIS CRAZY DAY AWAY...
SPTSCH!
THE DRUGS THE SIMM ANDROID SECRETED INTO HER BLOODSTREAM WILL WEAR OFF SOON...
SHE JUST NEEDS TO REST, RECUPERATE .. THAT'S ALL...
JUST A FEW SECONDS -- DAMMIT!
KLIKKT
NEED HELP?
NO!

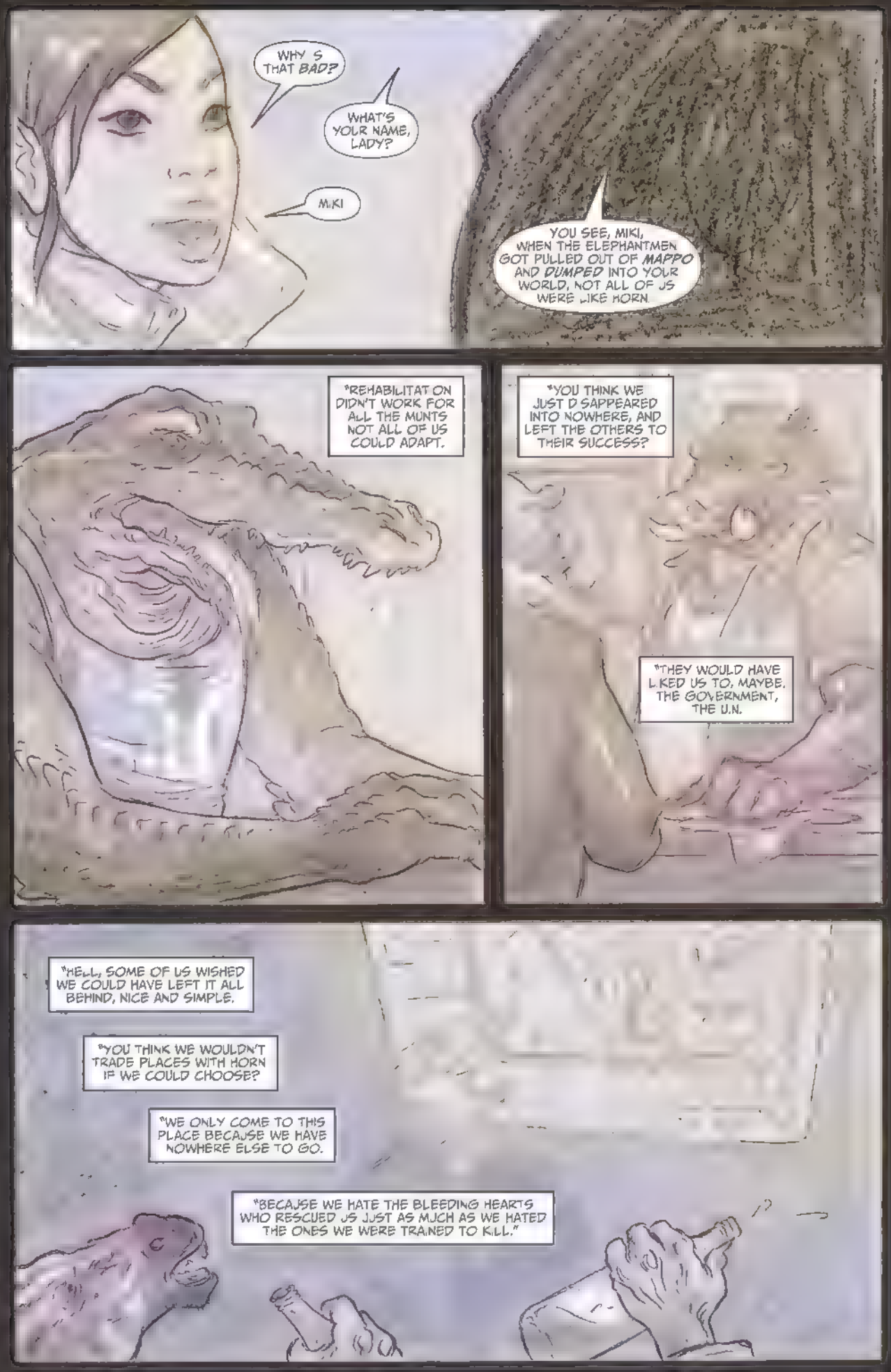
LOOKING GOOD, VANITY!
NO-NO-NO!
NO .. PLEASE... STAY AWAY FROM ME!
HUH? WHAT'S UP? IT'S ONLY ME! COMET!
OHH... COMET... SORRY, I, JH, THOUGHT ..
LET ME TRY THAT .. YOU HAVE TO WIGGLE IT A BIT...
I DON'T THINK RIGSBY HAS UPGRADED THE LOCKS SINCE THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY!
HERE WE GO -- AND LET ME TAKE YOUR BAGS FOR YOU TOO.
DRRT
YOU DO LOOK BEAT, VANITY. ARE THOSE ELEPHANTMEN AT THE AGENCY STRESSING YOU OUT?
COMET.. YOU KNOW I CAN'T TALK ABOUT HIP AND EBONY.

UM, THANKS, COMET... LOOK, I'D INVITE YOU IN, BUT...
OH, THAT'S OKAY, NO WORRIES. YOU'RE TIRED. I KNOW...
UH
KLIKT
NOK NOK
ONLY ME!
I'M SORRY, VANITY, I COMPLETELY SPACED... DON'T WANT YOU GOING HUNGRY ON MY ACCOUNT...

I--I'M SORRY
I JUST THOUGHT YOU— I THOUGHT...
CALM DOWN, LADY.
LURCH — GIMME A COUPLA WHISKEYS OVER HERE!
TAKE A SEAT YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WALKING OUT OF HERE ALONE.
NOT JUST RIGHT NOW, ANYWAYS.
CHINK
SO WHAT'S YOUR STORY?
WHAT BRINGS A GIRL LIKE YOU HERE?
I'M SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WAS THINKING. YOU LOOKED LIKE A FRIEND OF MINE...
FOR A SECOND
HUH. DOES THIS FRIEND OF YOURS COME HERE OFTEN?


I DON'T KNOW
I THOUGHT HE M.GHT...
SORRY, LADY, BJT ANY MUNT WHO GOES AROUND MAKING FRIENDS WITH HUMANS WON'T BE SPEND NG HIS FREE TIME HERE.
PEOPLE TOLD ME...
I WAS TOLD THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST AH, SOCIAL CLUB FOR, JM, Y'KNOW UH... YOU GUYS... ELEPHANTMEN.
SOCIAL CLUB? HUNH, THAT'S R CH.
D D THEY TELL YOU THAT THE CONCRETE FOUNDATION OF THIS PLACE -- THE FLOOR JNDER YOUR FEET RIGHT NOW -- WAS POURED OVER THE BODIES OF THREE DEAD G RLS, ABOUT YOUR AGE?
L KE PUTTING A PENNY UNDER THE MAST OF A SHIP, AS OLD LURCH OVER THERE USED TO SAY
YOU'RE PROBABLY THE F.RST GIRL TO COME IN HERE S.NCE.
NO. THEY D.DN'T MENT.ON THAT

SEE THAT OLD CROC? HIS NAME S LIPS. HE HOLDS THE RECORD FOR GRIEVOUS BODILY HARM IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.
DON'T WORRY. THE LIQUOR -- AND MIRROR -- HAVE TAKEN MOST OF THE FIGHT OUT OF HIM.
HE LOST HIS CROCODILE SMILE IN A BRAWL, SOME WHILE BACK.
HE LOOKS SCARY ANYWAY I BET THE UPPER JAW STILL WORKS FINE
...AND OBADIAH HORN HAS BEEN CLEARED OF SUSPICION...
THE POLICE NEVER CAME LOOKING FOR THOSE GIRLS?
NO.
NOT HERE, THEY DIDN'T.
HORN AND HIS FIANCEE, SAHARA, HAVE NOT BEEN SEEN IN PUBLIC SINCE THEY DISCHARGED THEMSELVES FROM SAINT FRANCIS'S
SCUMBAG MUNT! I HOPE HE ROTS IN HELL!
THAT'S HORN, ON SCREEN. ONE OF YOUR OWN.
WHY DO THEY CALL HIM SCUM?
BECAUSE HE'S CELEBRATED BY HUMANS.
BECAUSE HE'S MARRYING ONE.


WHY S THAT BAD?
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, LADY?
MIKI
YOU SEE, MIKI, WHEN THE ELEPHANTMEN GOT PULLED OUT OF MAPPO AND DUMPED INTO YOUR WORLD, NOT ALL OF JS WERE LIKE HORN.
"REHABILITAT ON DIDN'T WORK FOR ALL THE MUNTS NOT ALL OF US COULD ADAPT.
"YOU THINK WE JUST D SAPPEARED INTO NOWHERE, AND LEFT THE OTHERS TO THEIR SUCCESS?
"THEY WOULD HAVE L KED US TO, MAYBE, THE GOVERNMENT, THE U.N.
"HELL, SOME OF US WISHED WE COULD HAVE LEFT IT ALL BEHIND, NICE AND SIMPLE.
"YOU THINK WE WOULDN'T TRADE PLACES WITH HORN IF WE COULD CHOOSE?
"WE ONLY COME TO THIS PLACE BECAJSE WE HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.
"BECAJSE WE HATE THE BLEEDING HEARTS WHO RESCUED JS JJST AS MJCH AS WE HATED THE ONES WE WERE TRAINED TO K.LL."

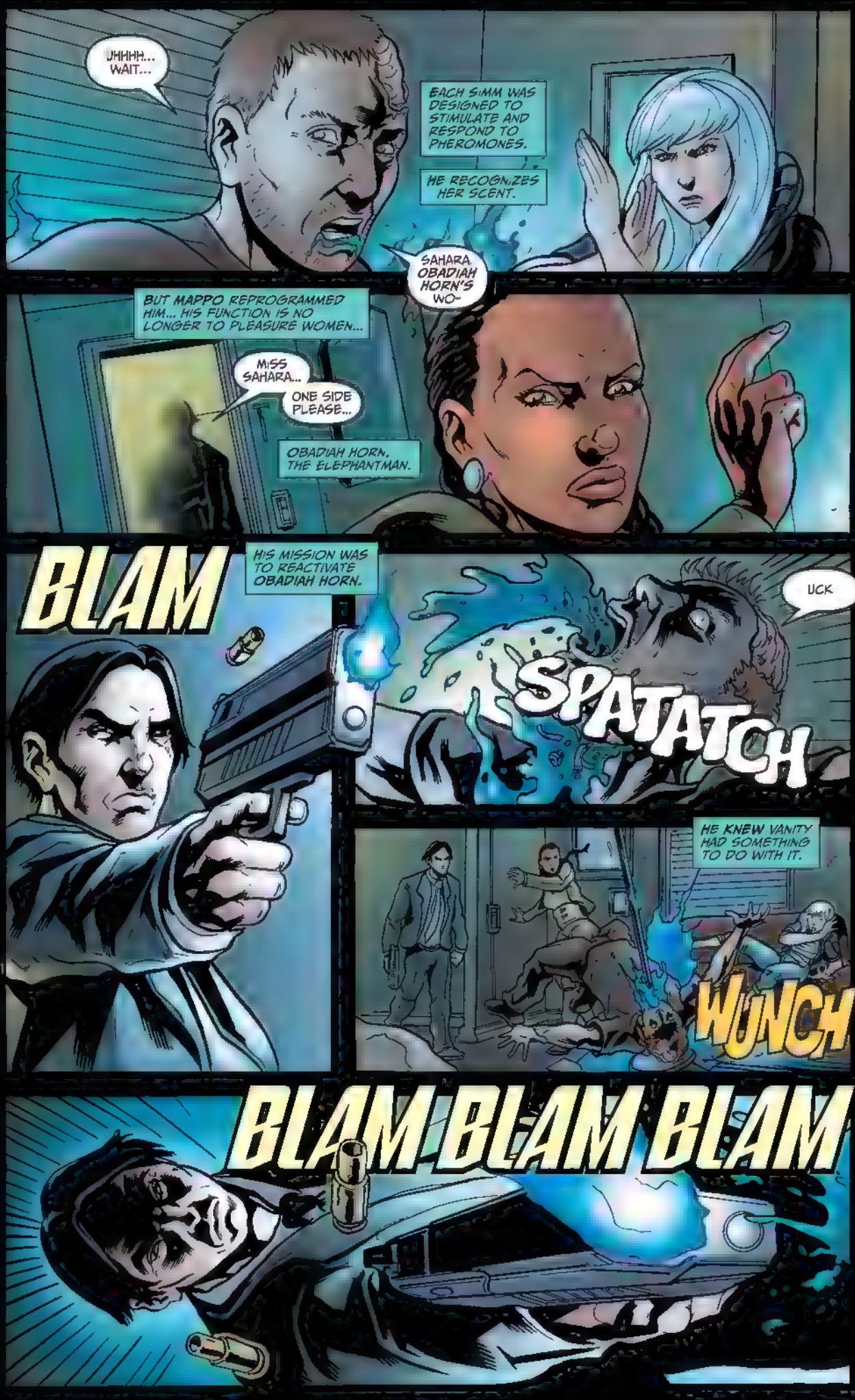
IVORY TOWERS
PANYA HAS TAKEN SAHARA'S PLACE SO OFTEN NOW, SHE KNOWS THE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT OF IVORY TOWERS BETTER THAN SHE KNOWS THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE.
THE ONLY THING SHE HASN'T DONE IS SLEEP IN SAHARA'S BED...
...BUT WE HAVE HIM IN OUR STUDIO, LIVE, FOR HIS FIRST PUBLIC INTERVIEW SINCE THE HEARINGS...
...LIE DOWN WITH SAHARA'S MAN...
WOULD SHE?
COULD SHE?
OF COURSE I'M DISTRESSED... SAHARA AND I HAVE MADE OUR FEELINGS KNOWN TO THE FAMILIES OF THE DECEASED
WOULD SHE TRADE PLACES WITH SAHARA COMPLETELY IF IT WERE POSSIBLE FOR HER TO DO SO?
WHY DOES THE IDEA EXCITE HER SO MUCH...?

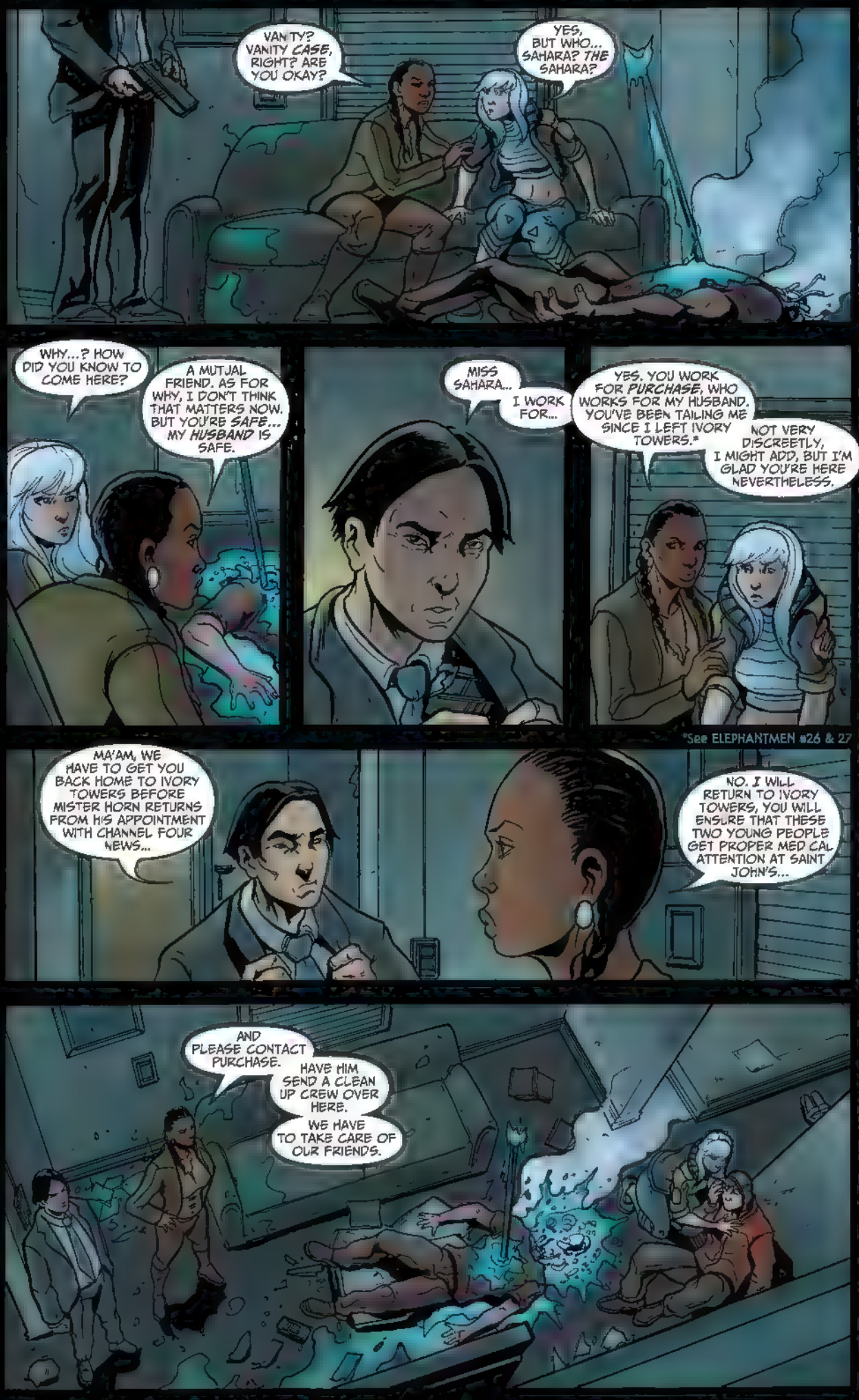
IS THIS A PRIVATE PARTY, OR DO YOU HAVE ROOM FOR ANOTHER WARM BODY...?
OH
HUH?
POW
WHAKT
SUH-- SIMM?
VANITY!
Y'KNOW, I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU!

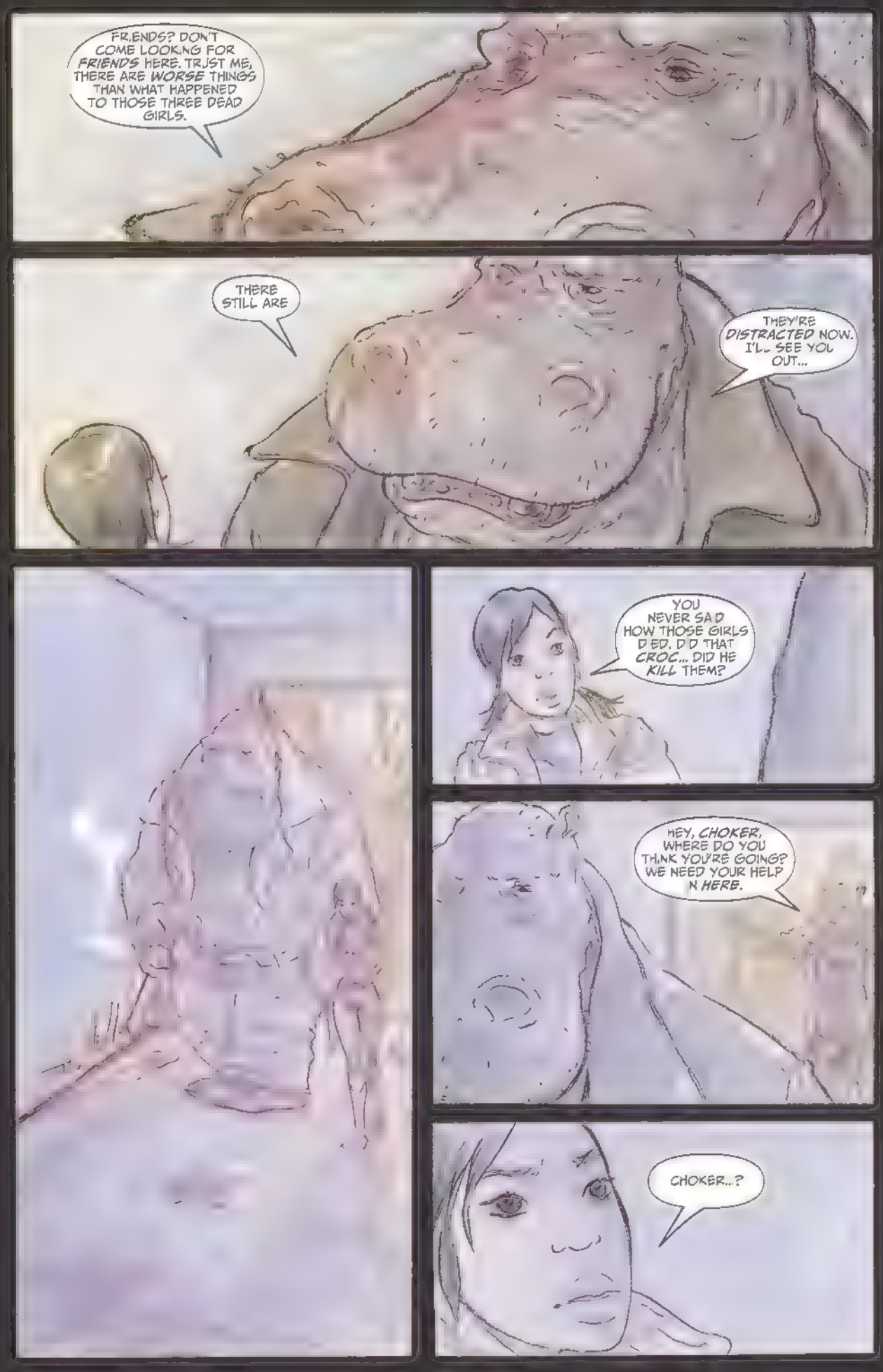
YOU'RE A GOOD LOOK NG GIRL, AREN'T YOU?
CAN I JOIN YOU?
UHH
NONO NONONO...
KRITCH
SIMM IS A NEXTGEN SEVEN ANDROID.
YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG.
VANITY, I'M JUST MAKING CONVERSATION
AND THESE ARE MY BEST PICK UP LINES.
FSHHHHT
A BASIC PLEASURE MODEL.*
*See ELEPHANTMEN #26
AHHH!
THWIP
THWIP
THWIP
CANDY, MEET BABY..
A BULLET THROUGH HIS HEAD* HAS DISRUPTED HIS CENTRAL PROCESSING FUNCTION, BUT HE REMEMBERS VANITY...
BABY, SAY GOODBYE TO CANDY...
HE'S JUST A LITTLE CONFUSED AS TO WHY HE REMEMBERS VANITY..
BUT HE CAN STILL GIVE HER A GOOD TIME.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #23

YOU REALLY ARE A GOOD-LOOKING GIRL...
TELL ME...
ARE YOU WEAK AT THE KNEES NOW?
WHA- WHAT...?
DON'T... WORRY.
I'M PROGRAMMED TO BE GEN-
-TULLLL
SAHARA HAS ENCOUNTERED ANDROIDS LIKE THIS BEFORE...
SHE HAS ENCOUNTERED MEN LIKE THIS BEFORE...
UH... DUH... DAMAGED
RESET... CUH-CLIENT PARAMETERS.

HUH HUNH... CHOCOLATE AND UHHH VANILLA...? YOU UHHH HERE FOR A THREESOME?!
GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME!
UNHH...
SNAP!
UNHH...
THAT IS ENOUGH!
HUH... OH, THIS COULD BE HUH FUN...
YOU GIRLS, UHHH... LIKE TO STRUGGLE?

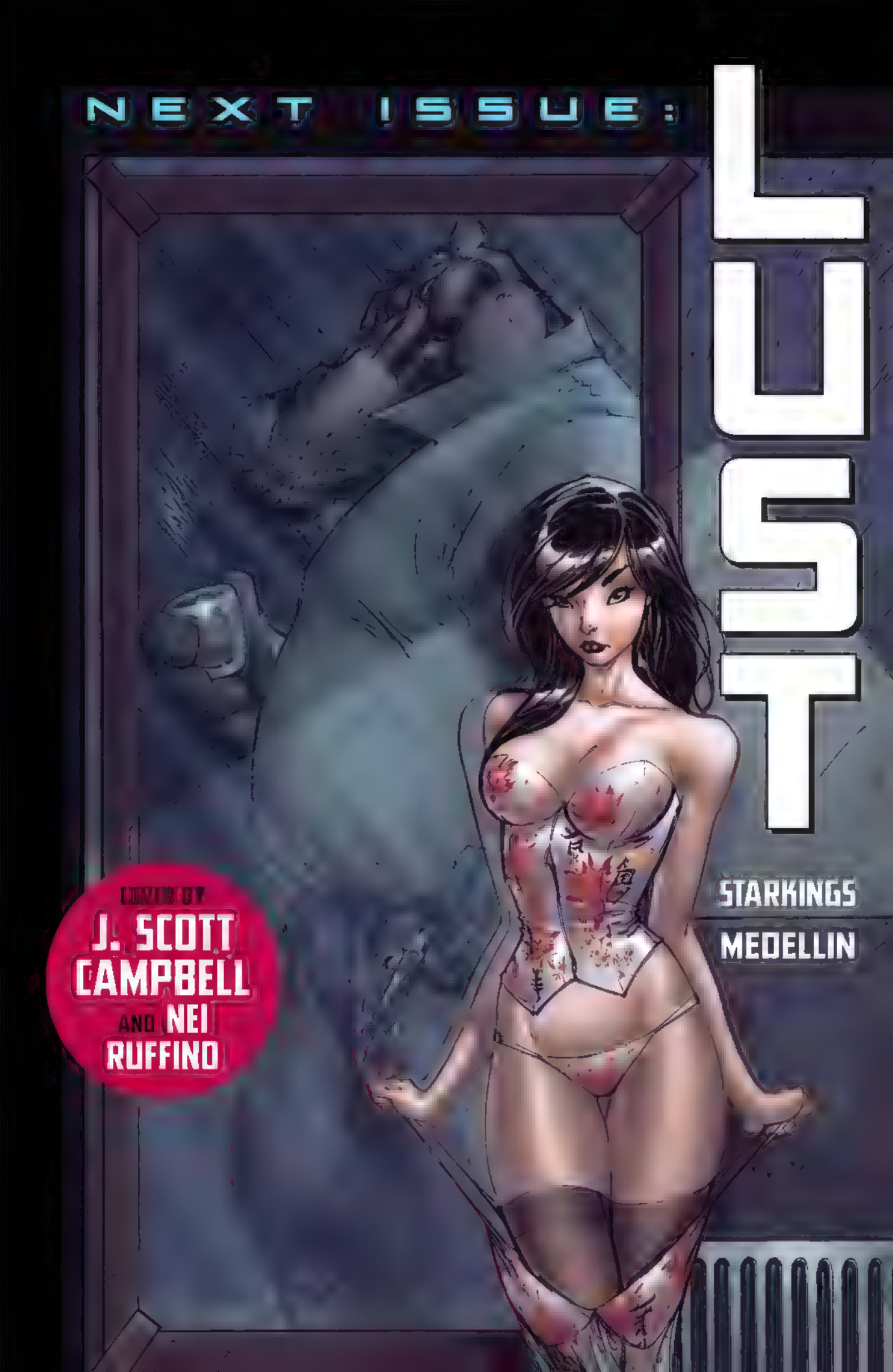

UHHHH... WAIT...
EACH SIMM WAS DESIGNED TO STIMULATE AND RESPOND TO PHEROMONES.
HE RECOGNIZES HER SCENT.
SAHARA OBADIAH HORN'S WO-
BUT MAPPO REPROGRAMMED HIM... HIS FUNCTION IS NO LONGER TO PLEASURE WOMEN...
MISS SAHARA...
ONE SIDE PLEASE...
OBADIAH HORN. THE ELEPHANTMAN.
BLAM
HIS MISSION WAS TO REACTIVATE OBADIAH HORN.
UCK
SPATATCH
HE KNEW VANITY HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT.
WUNCH
BLAM BLAM BLAM


VANITY? VANITY CASE, RIGHT? ARE YOU OKAY?
YES, BUT WHO... SAHARA? THE SAHARA?
WHY...? HOW DID YOU KNOW TO COME HERE?
A MUTUAL FRIEND. AS FOR WHY, I DON'T THINK THAT MATTERS NOW. BUT YOU'RE SAFE... MY HUSBAND IS SAFE.
MISS SAHARA...
I WORK FOR...
YES. YOU WORK FOR PURCHASE, WHO WORKS FOR MY HUSBAND. YOU'VE BEEN TAILING ME SINCE I LEFT IVORY TOWERS.*
NOT VERY DISCREETLY, I MIGHT ADD, BUT I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE NEVERTHELESS.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #26 & 27
MA'AM, WE HAVE TO GET YOU BACK HOME TO IVORY TOWERS BEFORE MISTER HORN RETURNS FROM HIS APPOINTMENT WITH CHANNEL FOUR NEWS...
NO. I WILL RETURN TO IVORY TOWERS, YOU WILL ENSURE THAT THESE TWO YOUNG PEOPLE GET PROPER MEDICAL ATTENTION AT SAINT JOHN'S...
AND PLEASE CONTACT PURCHASE.
HAVE HIM SEND A CLEAN UP CREW OVER HERE.
WE HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF OUR FRIENDS.


FRIENDS? DON'T COME LOOKING FOR FRIENDS HERE. TRUST ME, THERE ARE WORSE THINGS THAN WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE THREE DEAD GIRLS.
THERE STILL ARE
THEY'RE DISTRACTED NOW. I'LL SEE YOU OUT...
YOU NEVER SAID HOW THOSE GIRLS DIED. DID THAT CROC... DID HE KILL THEM?
HEY, CHOKER, WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING? WE NEED YOUR HELP IN HERE.
CHOKER...?

The WATERING HOLE

HER MOM HAD ALWAYS TOLD MIKI SHE WAS A BAD GIRL.
WHEN SHE GOT HOME IT WAS WAY PAST DAWN, AND HER MOM WASN'T WAITING UP FOR HER.
FOR ONCE, MIKI WISHED SHE WAS.


NEXT ISSUE:
LUST
STARKINGS
MEDELLIN
COVER BY
J. SCOTT CAMPBELL
AND NEI RUFFINO

COMING MARCH 2011

ELEPHANTMEN
NO! I AM NOT ONE OF THOSE ANIMALS!
I AM A HUMAN BEING!
THERE ARE TWO TRAGEDIES IN LIFE. ONE IS NOT TO GET YOUR HEART'S DESIRE.
THE OTHER IS TO GET IT
image MAN AND ELEPHANTMAN
STARKINGS MEDELLIN ROSHELL COOK
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GREAT JUMP ON ISSUE!

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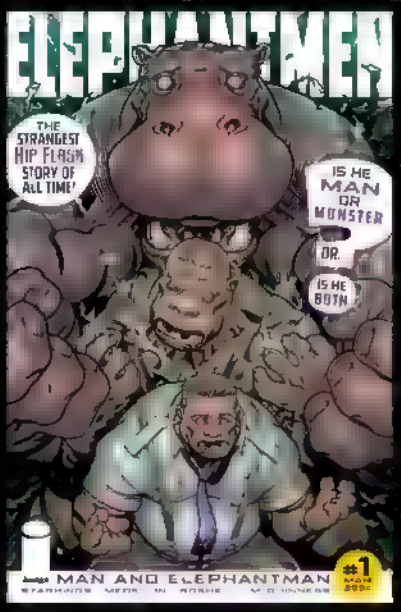
44 PAGES : $3.99

HIP FLASK WAKES ONE MORNING TO FIND EVERYTHING IS NOT AS IT SEEMS...

◀ COVER BY BOO COOK

RETAILER INCENTIVE COVER 1 IN 150 BY J SCOTT CAMPBELL!



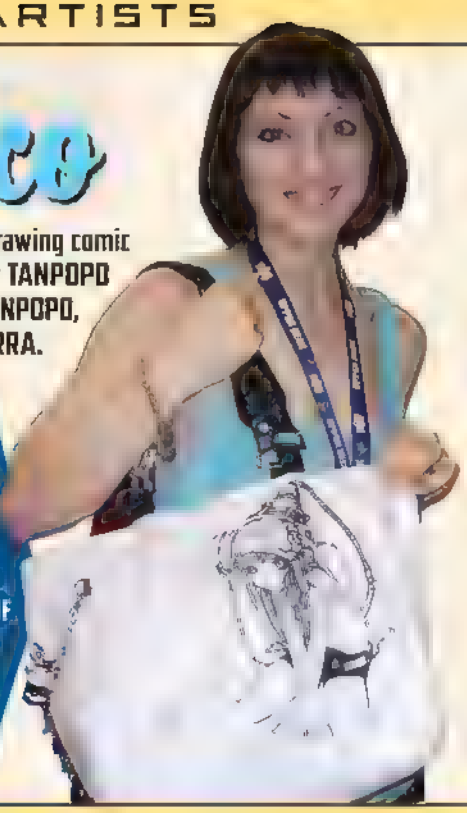
ED MCGUINNESS VARIANT IAN CHURCHILL COVERS RICHARD STARKINGS

Camilla D'Errico

is our second Canadian cover artist, and has been drawing comic books since 2001; you'll see her at shows under her TANPOPO banner, selling her beautiful self-published series, TANPOPO, as well as the Image series SKY PIRATES OF NEO TERRA.

Rich! pickings

What first attracted me to Camilla's work was her HELMET GIRLS handbag design (also available on t-shirts and prints – do yourself a Big Favour and visit camilladerrico.com) seen here when she stopped by the ELEPHANTMEN booth to pick up THE ART OF LADRÖNN. This issue's perfectly fragile picture of Vanity is the first of three covers Camilla has agreed to create for ELEPHANTMEN... watch for another this time next year!



Lisa Wood

is our lovely flip cover artist this issue, and is not only the manager of TRAVELLING MAN, one of the best, if not THE best comic book stores in my hometown of Leeds, she is also the organizer of THOUGHT BUBBLE, one of the best, if not THE best comic book conventions in England!

Rich! pickings

I flew back to Blighty this past [redacted] true, and Blimey, they most certainly [redacted] Hamsi, owner of the four TRAVELLING MAN stores in Manchester, York, Newcastle and Leeds (I've signed in them all now!), Clark Burscough, Steve Emmott, Michael Thompson, Kirsty Hughes, Becca Swainston and not forgetting Tamsin Isles for telling me about THOUGHT BUBBLE some two years ago! See you next time!

Dave Slater

works with Lisa at TRAVELLING MAN in Leeds, and during my signing there, showed me his cheeky cheesecake art on his phone... and sent me the pinup of Miki opposite just a couple of months later! You know if these guys weren't so busy selling comics to you and me, they just might be making comics!

TRAVELLING MAN was the first stop on Bon and Gemma's whistle stop tour of Leeds! In Brighton they only have ONE comic book store – in Leeds there are THREE! Bon, please don't put your blood-soaked hands on the window... Yes, I know I usually ask for MORE blood.

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THIS IS GOING TO HURT...

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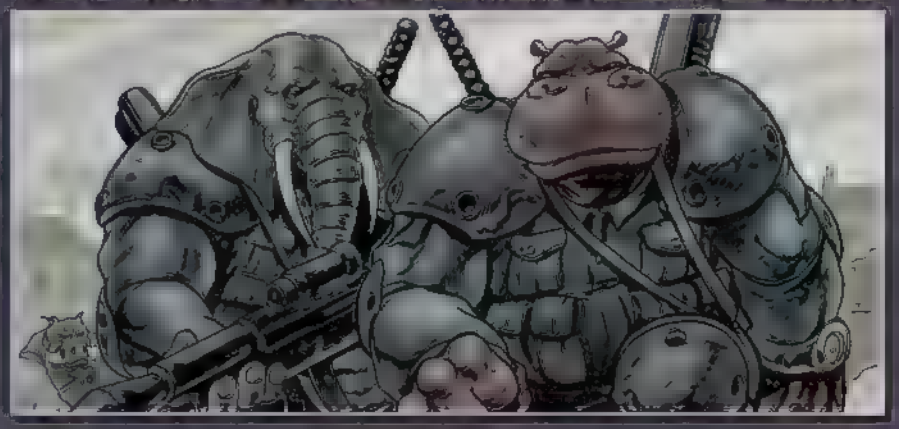
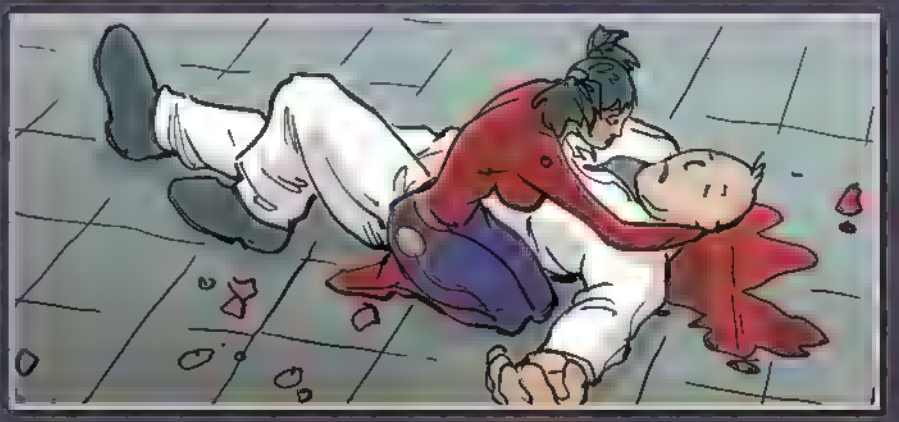
WAR TOYS

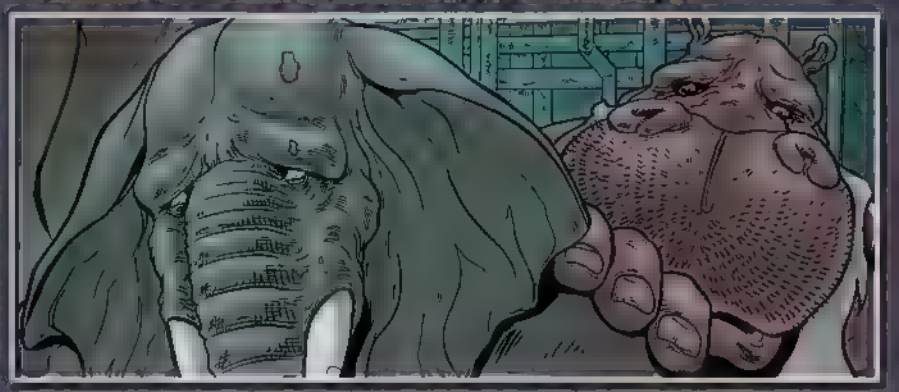
2259: THE ELEPHANTMEN ARE HUMAN/ANIMAL HYBRIDS CREATED BY THE MAPPO CORPORATION TO SERVE AS SUPERSOLDIERS IN A WAR BETWEEN AFRICA AND CHINA.



THAT WAR IS OVER AND NOW THERE ARE 15,000 ELEPHANTMEN LIVING IN THE WORLD AMONGST US. HIP FLASK IS AN ELEPHANTMAN WORKING FOR THE INFORMATION AGENCY IN LOS ANGELES ALONGSIDE ANOTHER SURVIVOR OF THE WAR, EBONY HIDE. CONTENT WITH HIS ROLE IN THE WORLD OF HUMANS, HIP HAS RECENTLY BEFRIENDED A YOUNG CAB DRIVER BY THE NAME OF MIKI... BUT FOLLOWING HER ENCOUNTER WITH A SIMM ANDROID, AN ENCOUNTER THAT CAUSED HIP TO INJURE HER COLLEAGUE, TINY, MIKI HAS BEEN KEEPING HER DISTANCE.



HAUNTED BY THE THINGS HE DID IN THE WAR – THINGS HE WAS FORCED TO QUESTION DURING HIS REHABILITATION – EBONY HIDE IS CONSTANTLY EYED WITH SUSPICION AND FEAR BY THE HUMANS HE PASSES ON THE STREET, AND BOTH EBONY AND HIP KNOW THAT THAT FEAR IS THERE WITH GOOD REASON.



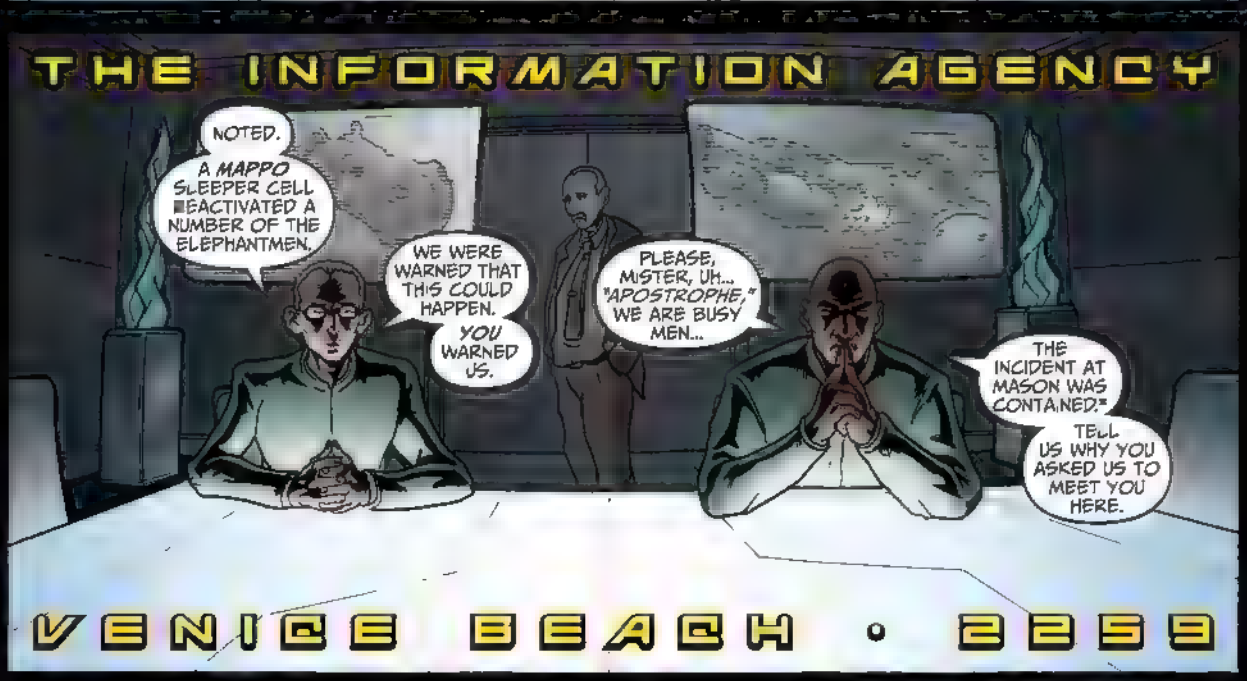
www.hipflask.com/elephantmen

e-mail your letters (and chocolate!) to RICHARD@HIPFLASK.COM

SANTA MONICA • 2259
M.KI...?

Words Axel Medellin Pictures
Medellin Wright Colours
SIREN SONG

HIP.


THE INFORMATION AGENCY
NOTED.
A MAPPO SLEEPER CELL REACTIVATED A NUMBER OF THE ELEPHANTMEN.
WE WERE WARNED THAT THIS COULD HAPPEN.
YOU WARNED US.
PLEASE, MISTER, UH... "APOSTROPHE," WE ARE BUSY MEN...
THE INCIDENT AT MASON WAS CONTAINED.*
TELL US WHY YOU ASKED US TO MEET YOU HERE.
VENICE BEACH • 2259

*See ELEPHANTMEN #26-28

IVORY TOWERS.
THE TALLEST BUILDING IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES...
BUT FROM UP HERE, IT DOESN'T LOOK ALL THAT IMPRESSIVE, DOES IT, PANYA?
YOU USED TO LIVE IN AWE OF SAHARA AND THE LIFE SHE LIVED.
FUNNY HOW EASILY, HOW QUICKLY, ONE'S PERSPECTIVE CAN SHIFT FROM ONE MOMENT TO THE NEXT, ISN'T IT?
PANYA...?

THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE
OH!
JOE.
LOS ANGELES · 2259

EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, KID?
SEEMED TO ME YOU WERE WORKING PRETTY LATE LAST NIGHT.
JOE, I'M FINE.
MISS SAHARA LEFT IVORY TOWERS FOR THE EVENING,* AND SHE RETURNED.
I CAME BACK HERE.
BUT THAT'S NOT THE WHOLE STORY, IS IT, PANYA?
*See ELEPHANTMEN #26, 27 & 29
OBADIAH HORN RETURNED BEFORE HIS FIANCÉE.
ANOTHER APOLOGY.
THEY WOULD HAVE US APOLOGIZE FOR BEING ALIVE.
YOU DID YOUR JOB WELL, YOU STAYED IN CHARACTER.
YOU KEPT THE LIGHTS DOWN LOW AND WHISPERED,
OH, OBADIAH, MY LOVE...
HE WAS TOO DISTRACTED TO NOTICE ANYTHING AMISS... HOW LIKE A MAN...
SO YOU PREPARED YOURSELF FOR BED...
THEN SAHARA RETURNED...

YOU SAID...
OH, THANK GOODNESS!
AND...
MISS SAHARA, I WAS SO WORRIED!
"OH, YOU POOR THING," SAHARA EXCLAIMED... "I AM SO SORRY!"
"PURCHASE WILL MAKE SURE YOU GET HOME SAFELY"
IF ONLY SHE KNEW WHAT HAD CROSSED YOUR MIND, PANYA...
"HORN IS JUST A MAN," YOU'D REALIZED..
"NOT ALL THAT IMPRESSIVE...
IN FACT "JUST LIKE ANY OTHER MAN ."
WELL, GET SOME REST. WE'LL BE BUSY TONIGHT.
AND THEY WILL EXPECT YOU TO DANCE...
EXPECTATIONS... SO MANY EXPECTATIONS... BUT SO MANY SURPRISES TOO...
FUNNY HOW EASILY ONE'S PERSPECTIVE CAN SHIFT FROM ONE MOMENT TO THE NEXT, ISN'T IT?

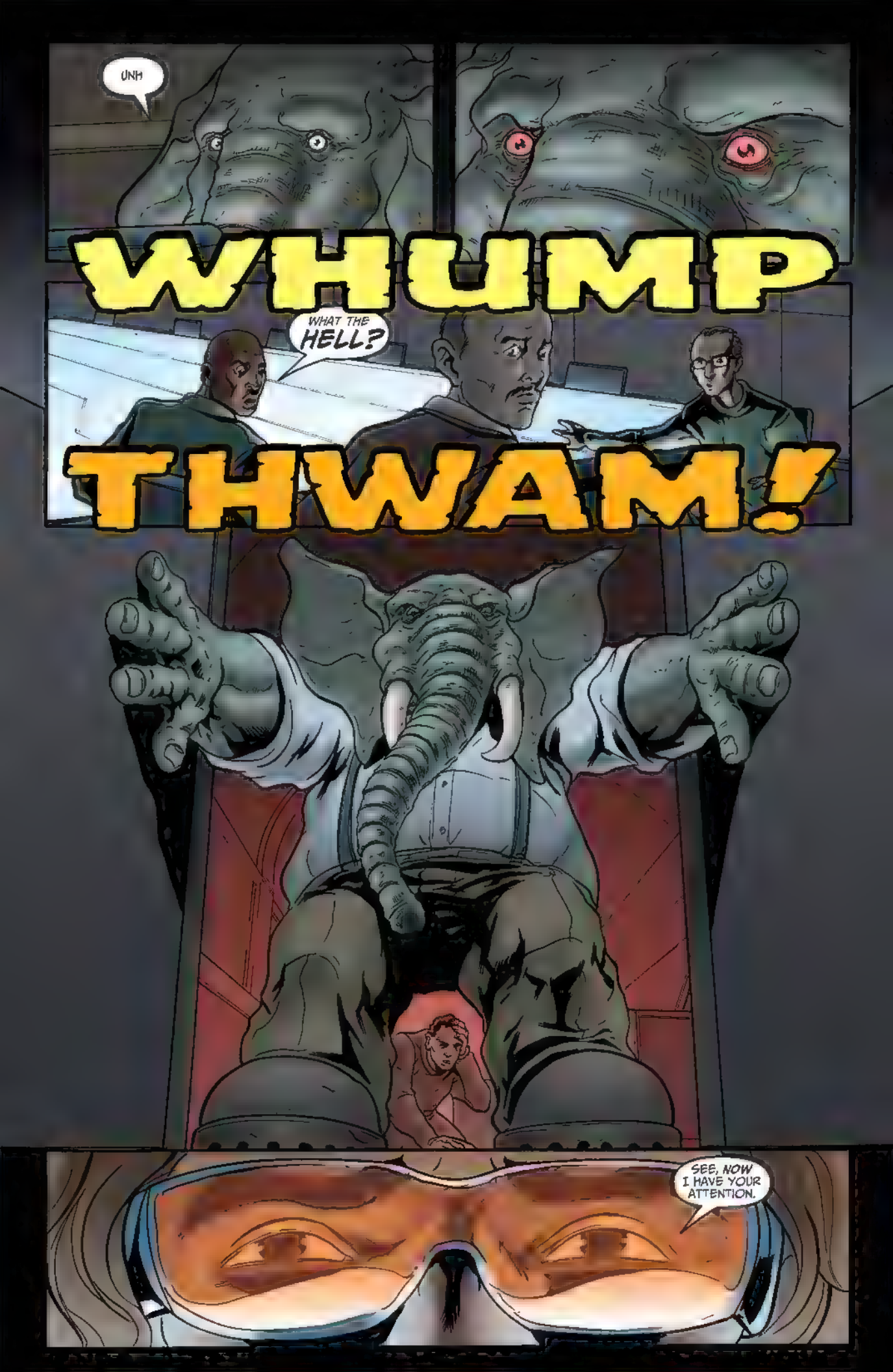
CASBAH JOE HAS NEVER TAKEN HIS POSITION FOR GRANTED.
HIS ROLE AS MANAGER OF THE CLASSIEST AND MOST EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE IN LOS ANGELES -- OR RATHER, ABOVE LOS ANGELES -- ALLOWS HIM TO ASSOCIATE WITH THE RICHEST AND MOST POWERFUL MEMBERS OF THE CITY'S ELITE...
MANY PEOPLE PASS THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE... MEN AND ELEPHANTMEN...
BUT VERY LITTLE ESCAPES HIS OWN EYE...
LIKE THOSE TWO TAROT CARDS ON PANYA'S TABLE...
THE LOVERS AND THE TOWER.
PORTENTS OF BOTH CREATION AND DESTRUCTION...
SEEMS LIKE THOSE TWO ALWAYS GO HAND IN HAND.
PANYA READ JOE'S TAROT ONCE...
THAT WAS WHEN THE SILENCER CAME TO STAY.*
WELL, WELL, WELL... NICE LITTLE RESTAJRANT YOU HAVE YOURSELF HERE.
THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE.
I GET IT.
I GUESS YOUR OWNER HAS A SENSE OF HUMOUR, HUH?
*See ELEPHANTMEN #5
NO, JOE HAS NEVER TAKEN HIS POSITION FOR GRANTED... BUT HE HAS OFTEN QUESTIONED WHY HE HAS WORKED SO HARD TO HOLD ONTO IT FOR SO LONG.

UHHH... CAN I POUR YOU A DRINK?
SURE -- A J.D AND COKE! ON THE ROCKS.
HEY, NICE APARTMENT, HIP...
IT'S... SO BIG!
I FEEL LIKE I'M A LITTLE DOLL!
AND WHO SAYS YOU'RE NOT?!
CHEEKY.
HAH. YOU GOT MY PRESENT.

BOTTOMS UP, HIP! FROM THIS MOMENT ON, RIGHT?
YEAH. SURE.
HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID.
OH, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
YOU STILL HAVE THIS LITTLE GUY!

Y'KNOW, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT YOU WENT THROUGH A LOT TO GET AHOLD OF THIS FELLA...*
THERE'S GOTTA BE AN INTERESTING STORY BEHIND IT, AM I RIGHT?
GOTTA BE.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #2
OH, WHAT? YOU'RE NOT GIVING ANYTHING AWAY?!
HM.
YOU'RE THE REAL MYSTERY IN MYSTERY CITY, AREN'T YOU, HIP?

THE INFORMATION AGENCY
SEE THIS DEVICE?
I PICKED IT UP FROM RECEPTION. IT'S A PEET'S COFFEE CARD, DESIGNED TO TRANSMIT YOUR DRINK ORDER TO THE NEAREST COFFEE CART OR SHOP...
IF YOU NEED A SHOT OF CAFFEINE, I'M SURE GRUENWALD HERE CAN GET YOU SOMETHING.
SEE, THAT'S THE TRICK... MOST CONSUMERS ACQUIRE DEVICES LIKE THIS AND ASK, "WHAT DOES IT DO?"
I GET AHOLD OF IT AND ASK...
"WHAT CAN I MAKE IT DO?"
THPP


UNH
WHUMP
WHAT THE HELL?
THWAM!
SEE, NOW I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION.

HMP
THAT TICKLES!
MIKI...
SHH!
COME
CHTNK
OH, HEY THERE, WAGNER!
Y'KNOW, I, UH... I DON'T THINK H.P WILL BE NEEDING YOU THIS EVENING...
ULP! AHHH...
UM... POWERING DOWN...

I HAVE A NICE BUTT...
DON'T YOU THINK?
CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE, HIP?
I DRESSED UP FOR YOU.
ADMIT IT, SWEETHEART, IT FREAKS YOU OUT A LITTLE.
JUST A BIT...
SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY, MIKI COULD BARELY LOOK HIM IN THE EYE .*
I AM NOT YOUR SWEETHEART! YOU AND EBONY HAVE BROUGHT ME NOTHING BUT TROUBLE!
JUST STAY AWAY FROM ME!
HE CAN'T BLAME HER OF COURSE, BECAUSE OF HIM, MIKI'S FRIEND TINY IS RECOVERING IN INTENSIVE CARE.
AND NOW LIEUTENANT BLACKTHORNE IS RECOVERING FROM ELEPHANTMEN-INFLICTED INJURIES IN THE SAME HOSPITAL, IN THE SAME WEEK.*
THEN, IN A RELATED INCIDENT, VANITY CASE . ATTACKED BY A DEMENTED ANDROID IN HER OWN APARTMENT...*
WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF SAHARA HADN'T APPEARED AT THE CRUCIAL MOMENT?

*See ELEPHANTMEN #24

*See ELEPHANTMEN #27 & 28

*See ELEPHANTMEN #29

FOR THAT MATTER, WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ALL THE ELEPHANTMEN IF NOT FOR SAHARA?
FUNNY, EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, HIP STILL HAS FEELINGS FOR HER.
WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT HIP'S THINKING...
BUT YOU LOOK KISS-THE-MIRROR GORGEOUS TO ME, MIKI...
MWAH!
HEY, WHAT'S IN HERE, BIG GUY...?
OH, THIS IS JUST TOO COOL!
YOU HAVE A POOL!
MAN, THE GOVERNMENT REALLY SPOILS YOU GUYS...

"...ANYONE WOULD THINK YOU'D FOUGHT THE WAR ON *OUR* SIDE!
THPP
UHHH...
WHAT~~?
YEAH, *EBONY HIDE*, ISN'T IT?
COULD YOU GRAB ME A CAPPUCC.NO?
HUMOR H.M.
LIKE I HAVE NOTHING *BETTER* TO DO...
AND WHAT'S *YOUR* PROBLEM?

GENTLEMEN, AS I'M SURE YOU KNOW...
MAPPO NEVER REALLY TRUSTED THE ELEPHANTMEN'S PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONING.
SO EACH TRANSGENIC WAS FITTED WITH THE IMPERIUMITE DEVICE...*
WHICH WOULD SUPPRESS THEIR, LET'S SAY, HUMAN INSTINCTS...
...AND ACCENTUATE THEIR MORE ANIMALISTIC RESPONSES.
WHEN THE IMPERIUMITES ARE ACTIVATED, THE ELEPHANTMEN ANSWER THE CALL OF THEIR BASER PRIMAL URGES LIKE SAILORS LURED TO THE ROCKS BY A SIREN'S SONG.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #21
OUR OWN GOVERNMENT CUT SHORT THE OPERATION TO SURGICALLY REMOVE THESE DEVICES, CHOOSING INSTEAD TO SIMPLY... SWITCH THEM "OFF."
IF I CAN REACTIVATE THE IMPERIUMITE IN ONE OF YOUR AGENTS WITH A COFFEE PIN...
JUST IMAGINE WHAT COULD BE DONE WITH THE PROPER EQUIPMENT!
OH, BUT WAIT, YOU DON'T HAVE TO IMAGINE, DO YOU?
ARE YOU THREATENING US—?
OF COURSE NOT!
I'M OFFERING MY SERVICES!
NO ONE WANTS TO SEE THE ELEPHANTMEN USED AS WEAPONS AGAIN.
I CAN DEVELOP TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL RENDER THE IMPERIUMITES COMPLETELY USELESS.
WELL, THIS IS VERY INTRIGUING!
MISTER, ER, APOSTROPHE, WOULD YOU MIND WAITING IN MY OFFICE FOR A FEW MINUTES WHILE MISTER LA MANTIA, MISTER CROSSLAND AND I DISCUSS THE, UM, ACTUAL TERMS OF YOUR, UH, ENGAGEMENT.
OH-KAY...

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN, HIP...
SINCE YOU WENT SKINNY-DIPPING?
I'M HALF HIPPO, MIKI...
I, UH, I... SWIM EVERY NIGHT.
I BET YOU *DO!*
GOOD FOR RELEASING THE TENSION!
SOMETIMES, YOU'VE JUST GOT TO LEAN BACK, HOLD YOUR BREATH...
...AND TAKE THE *PLUNGE.*
MIKI IS RIGHT, OF COURSE. IF THERE'S ONE THING HIP HAS LEARNED ABOUT THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE...
WELL, ARE YOU GOING TO JOIN ME?

...YOU HAVE TO JUMP RIGHT IN...
AND, AS HE LOOKS LONGINGLY INTO MIKI'S EYES...
AS HIS HEART POUNDS WHEN A SMILE LIGHTS UP HER FACE...
AS HE SWIMS INTO HER SOFT AND GENTLE EMBRACE...

THERE'S ONE THOUGHT THAT FILLS HIS MIND...
"THIS IS GOING TO HURT."

MISTER, UH, MISTER APOSTROPHE, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING IN... BUT I'M AFRAID THAT THEY'RE, UH, NOT GOING TO ACT ON ANY OF YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS.
WHAT?
AND RUN THE RISK OF SOME MADMAN OR ANOTHER TERRORIST CELL REACTIVATING THE ELEPHANTMEN?
STARTING ANOTHER WAR?!
ARE THEY INSANE?
NOT INSANE, NO...
THEY KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY'RE DOING.
YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT MEN LIKE CROSSLAND AND LA MANTIA ARE EMPOWERED TO DO... QUESTIONABLE THINGS TO PRESERVE THE ABILITY TO REACTIVATE THE ELEPHANTMEN.
BECAUSE ONE DAY, WE MIGHT NEED THEM.
UHHH... PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS CONVERSATION IS COVERED BY THE NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT YOU SIGNED WHEN WE AGREED TO MEET WITH YOU.
I AM SORRY
SORRY?
WE'LL ALL BE SORRY.
BECAUSE IF THERE'S ANOTHER ELEPHANTMEN HOLOCAUST...
WE'LL KNOW THAT WE COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING ABOUT IT...
AND EVERYONE THAT GETS HURT...

"NOT JUST THE PEOPLE WHO *USUALLY* GET HURT IN A WAR... THE SOLDIERS ON BOTH SIDES...
"BUT THE PEOPLE THAT CARE ABOUT THEM...
"ORDINARY PEOPLE...
"THEY WON'T FORGET.
"THEY WON'T FORGIVE US.
"AND WHY SHOULD THEY?
"IF YOU AND I FAIL TO STOP A WAR, THEN WE'RE JUST AS GUILTY AS THOSE THAT START IT."

MISTER APOSTROPHE, THERE IS ALREADY A WAR ON.
AND THERE ARE ALWAYS CASUALTIES.

NEXT MONTH:

ELEPHANTMEN

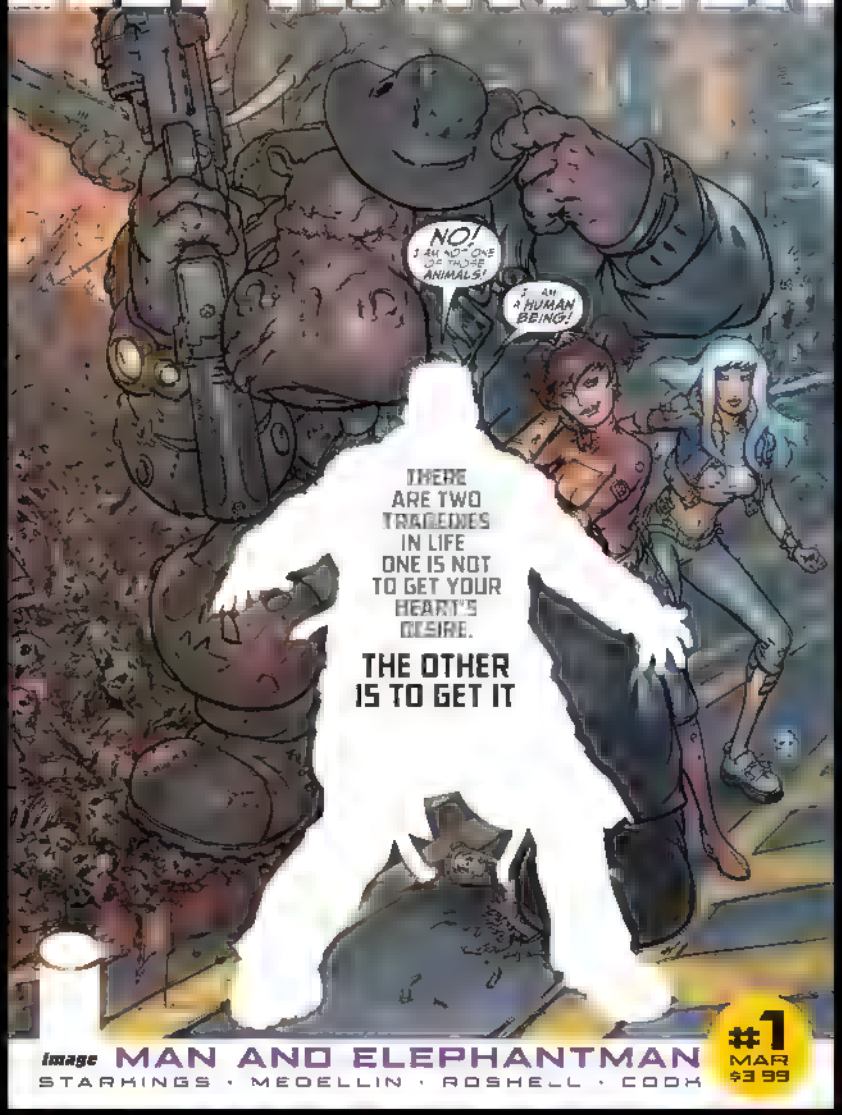

NO! I AM NOT ONE OF THOSE ANIMALS!
I AM A HUMAN BEING!
THERE ARE TWO TRAGEDIES IN LIFE ONE IS NOT TO GET YOUR HEART'S DESIRE.
THE OTHER IS TO GET IT

image MAN AND ELEPHANTMAN
STARKINGS · MEDELLIN · ROSHELL · COOK
#1 MAR $3.99

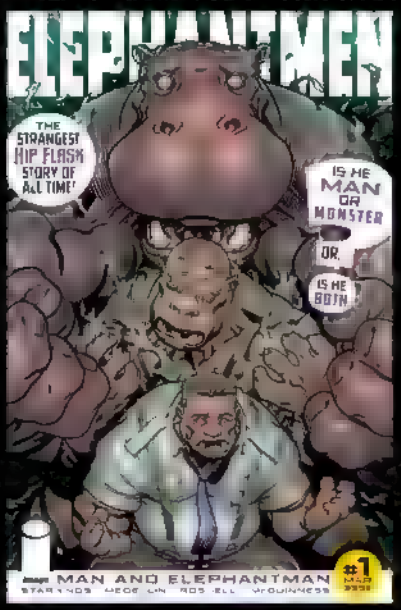
GREAT JUMP ON ISSUE! **MAN AND ELEPHANTMAN**

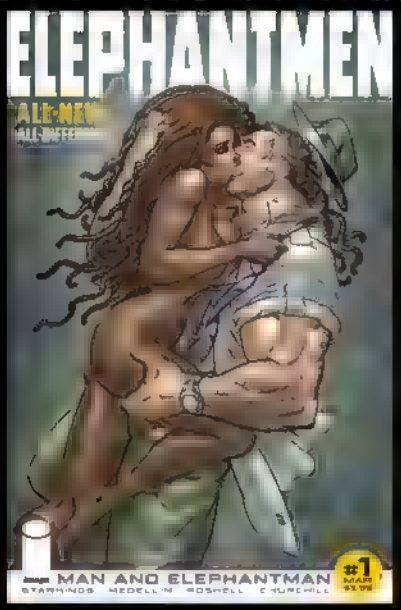
44 PAGES · $3.99

HIP FLASK WAKES ONE MORNING TO FIND EVERYTHING IS NOT AS IT SEEMS...

◀ COVER BY BOO COOK

RETAILER INCENTIVE COVER (1 IN 15) BY J SCOTT CAMPBELL

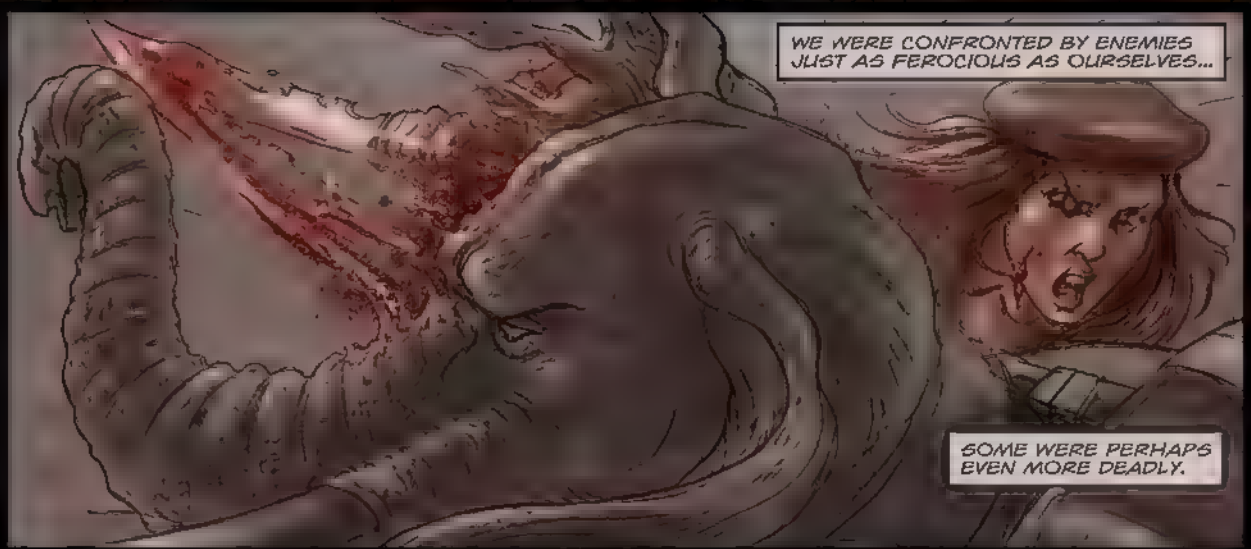


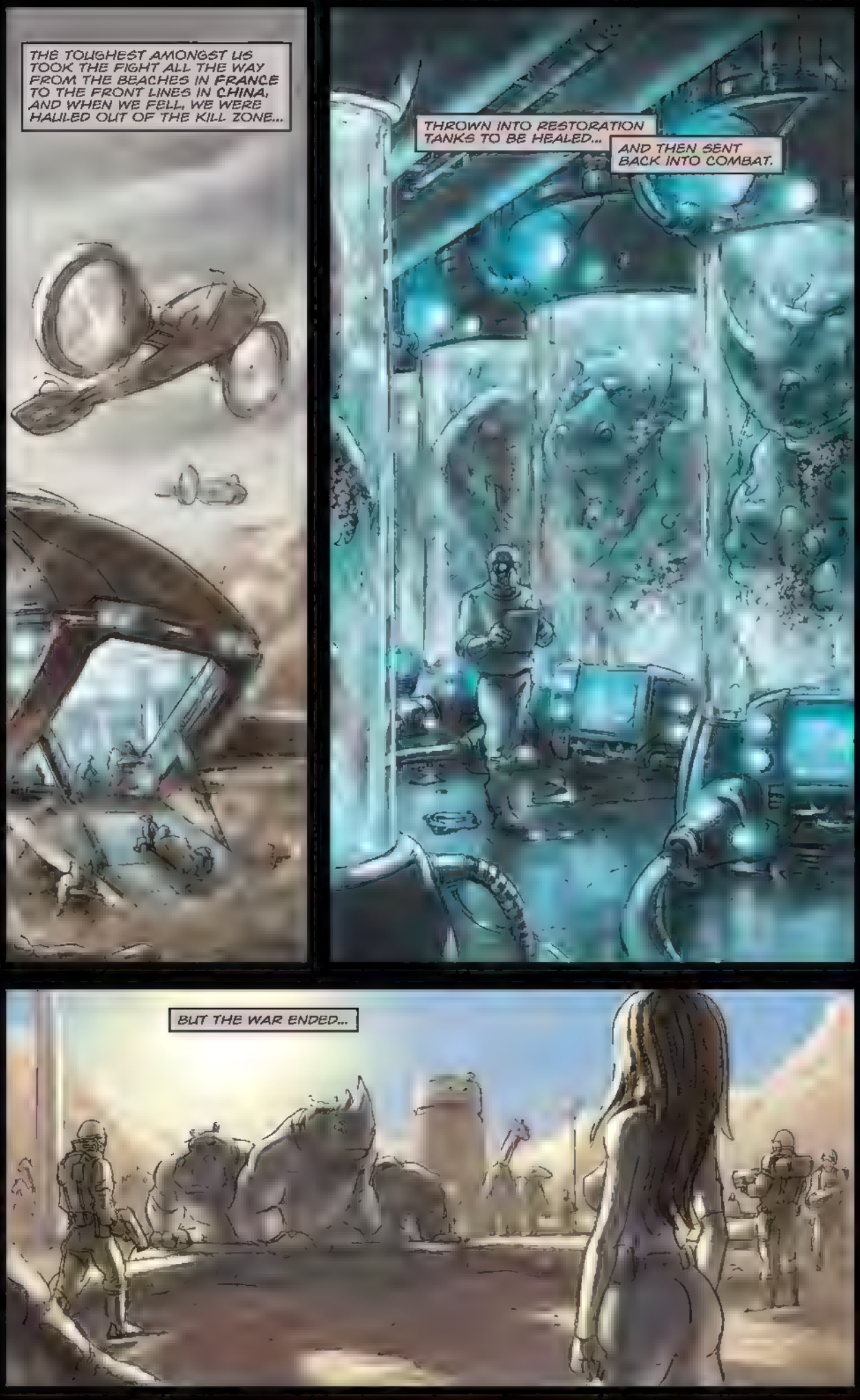


ED MCGUINNESS VARIANT IAN CHURCHILL COVERS RICHARD STARKINGS

I WAS IN A TERRIBLE WAR...
A WAR TO END ALL WARS.
I FOUGHT FOR AFRICA, ALONGSIDE OTHER CREATURES LIKE ME.. WE CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE ELEPHANTMEN.

WE HAD BEEN GENETICALLY DESIGNED AS WARRIORS THAT COULD RESIST DISEASE AND SURVIVE EVEN THE HARSHEST ENVIRONMENTS KNOWN TO MAN.
OUR ORDERS WERE TO DESTROY ANY AND ALL WHO STOOD IN OUR WAY.


WE WERE CONFRONTED BY ENEMIES JUST AS FEROCIOUS AS OURSELVES...
SOME WERE PERHAPS EVEN MORE DEADLY.


THE TOUGHEST AMONGST US TOOK THE FIGHT ALL THE WAY FROM THE BEACHES IN FRANCE TO THE FRONT LINES IN CHINA. AND WHEN WE FELL, WE WERE HAULED OUT OF THE KILL ZONE...
THROWN INTO RESTORATION TANKS TO BE HEALED...
AND THEN SENT BACK INTO COMBAT.
BUT THE WAR ENDED...

THOUSANDS OF ELEPHANTMEN SURVIVED...
FOR FIVE LONG YEARS WE WERE RE-EDUCATED. "REHABILITATED..."

THEN SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO LIVE OUT THE REST OF OUR LIVES AMONG HUMANS...

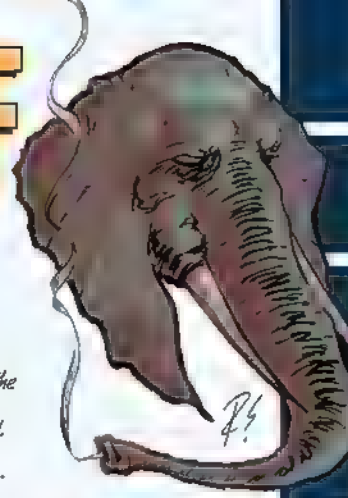
SOME ELEPHANTMEN TOOK MUNDANE JOBS IN SOCIETY, MAKING SHOES OR WASHING LINEN. ME AND EBONY HIDE WORKED FOR THE INFORMATION AGENCY INVESTIGATING CRIMES AMONGST AND AGAINST ELEPHANTMEN...
BUT THEN, ONE MORNING...

MAN and ELEPHANTMAN

Richard Starkings Words
Axel Medellin Pictures

READ THE WHOLE STORY IN ELEPHANTMEN: MAN AND ELEPHANTMAN #1 ON SALE MARCH 30TH!

THE SECRET HISTORY OF



I had a problem due to one reason and another, ELEPHANTMEN was running late. Moritat had taken on a second title, THE SPIRIT, and I didn't want to have to wait for his schedule to open up... it occurred to me that Just n worked fastest one page at a time, sketching for fans at shows, and JG had once joked that we should feed script pages to fans and ask THEM to ask him to draw each page... I also remembered that Joe Keatinge had invited artists to submit pinups for the 25th issue of Image Comics' PROOF title and I always thought that would make a nice feature in ELEPHANTMEN. Then it dawned on me -- probably on one of my long sunny walks on the beach in Playa Del Rey, or perhaps over a crêpe in KC's Crêpes -- that I could create a story out of splash pages AND showcase a gallery of artists for OUR 25th issue. The title, "THE BIG PICTURE" seemed obvious and allowed me to bring Gruenwald from issue #5 to tell the tale... I hastily doodled the rough plan for the issue you see below, and jotted down a wishlist of artists who might pitch in... before long I had the list you see opposite.

For PR purposes, Joe Keatinge suggested the title, "The Secret History of the Elephantmen!" and I settled on 25 guest artists for the obvious reason! When he asked for more information on the story I warned *Don't ask me for a plot or script -- it's all precariously balanced in my head... The whole issue (THE BIG PICTURE) is a continuity issue in the form of a reminiscence by a human character called Gruenwald covering the history of the Elephantmen from his point of view. A handful of captions and balloons on each page will describe the events depicted.*

Here's the lineup...

- *Tim Sale -- page 1 Gruenwald in bed*
- *Moritat -- page 2 Gruenwald in rain*
- *Gabriel Bautista -- page 3 Mushroom corpses*
- *Duncan Rouleau -- page 4 HazMat suit*
- *Sheldon Vella -- page 5 The Ring of Fire!*
- *Dave Gibbons -- page 6 WAR TOYS*
- *Dougie Braithwaite -- page 7 UN soldiers*
- *Gary Erskine -- page 8 Sahara at MAPPO base*
- *Bucce -- page 9 close up on Hip*
- *Whilce Portacio -- page 10 Ebony airlift*
- *Ian Churchill -- page 11 Horn and Purchase*
- *Shaky Kane -- page 12 Horn close up*
- *Raul Trevino -- page 13 Desert Breezes*
- *Boo Cook -- page 14 Tusk in cell*
- *Paul Grist -- page 15 Guru Elephantman*
- *Ladrönn -- page 16 Hip Redeye*
- *Marian -- page 17 Miki and Tiny in hospital*
- *Andre -- page 18 Ebony beset by fangirls*
- *Dave Kine -- page 19 Nikken in prison*
- *Chris Burnham -- page 20 SIMM*
- *Brandon Graham -- page 21 Vanity*
- *Dan McDaid -- page 22 Ebony & Hip*
- *Tom Scioli -- page 23 Blackthorne*
- *Pia Guerra -- page 24 Sunset*
- *Axel Medellin -- page 25 Restoration*
- *Rob Steen -- page 26 Croc in tank*

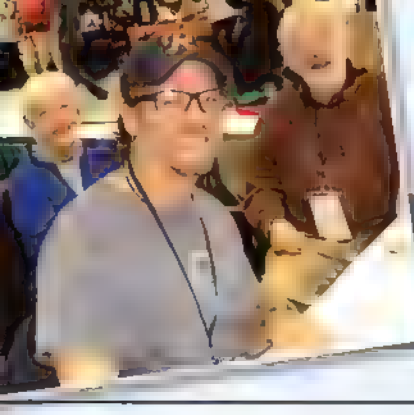
I never did write a script as such but sent individual emails to each of the artists detailing each scene. so here, over the next hundred pages or so, we present the Secret History of ELEPHANTMEN #25, with a few choice morsels thrown in for good measure!

EN..OY!

Richard Starkings

LOS ANGELES 2259...uh, 2011

ELEPHANTMEN 25



TIM SALE

Although HULK: GRAY is my favourite of all the Loeb/Sale tours de force, I'd be remiss not to plug TIM SALE BLACK AND WHITE by Yours Truly, Mister Tim Sale and John JG Rosheit.

Left: Tim with his parents, ECCC 2010

Rich! pickings

TIM! Okay, so we're looking directly down on a king size bed from the ceiling fan. It's very late at night and we see Gruenwald on the left of the bed staring up at the ceiling, unable to sleep. His right arm is hooked around his head, the other is positioned so that his left hand rests on his stomach. He wears a vest -- or a sleeveless undershirt as you Yanks say -- and striped pyjama bottoms. We can see his attire because his wife has turned away from him to the edge of her side and pulled all the covers off him. The sheets are wrinkled and untidy. We can see that his wife has long blonde hair, and that's about all, her position is very curled up, back to her husband.

From the wall on the left of the page on Gruenwald's side, city light streams in through venetian blinds, we see from the shadow that at least one blind is broken. On either side of the bed are bedside tables. Each table is DIFFERENT and although both tables have bedside lights, they are also not matching. On Gruenwald's side, everything is very office like, so the lamp is more of a bar with a strip lamp, a file of papers he's been looking through and a baseball. Heh.

His wife's lamp has a shade, but not too fussy or old fashioned. A box of Kleenex sits on her table and some screwed up tissues might suggest she's been crying. A bottle of sleeping pills is visible and a pile of paperback books. Some women's magazines lie on the floor, half under the bedside table.

We won't see the whole room, just two walls top and left and the whole bed -- so the dressing table may be off frame at the bottom of the page. If possible, lets see a chair near Gruenwald with his shoulder hoster and gun. If not, let's have it on the bedside table.

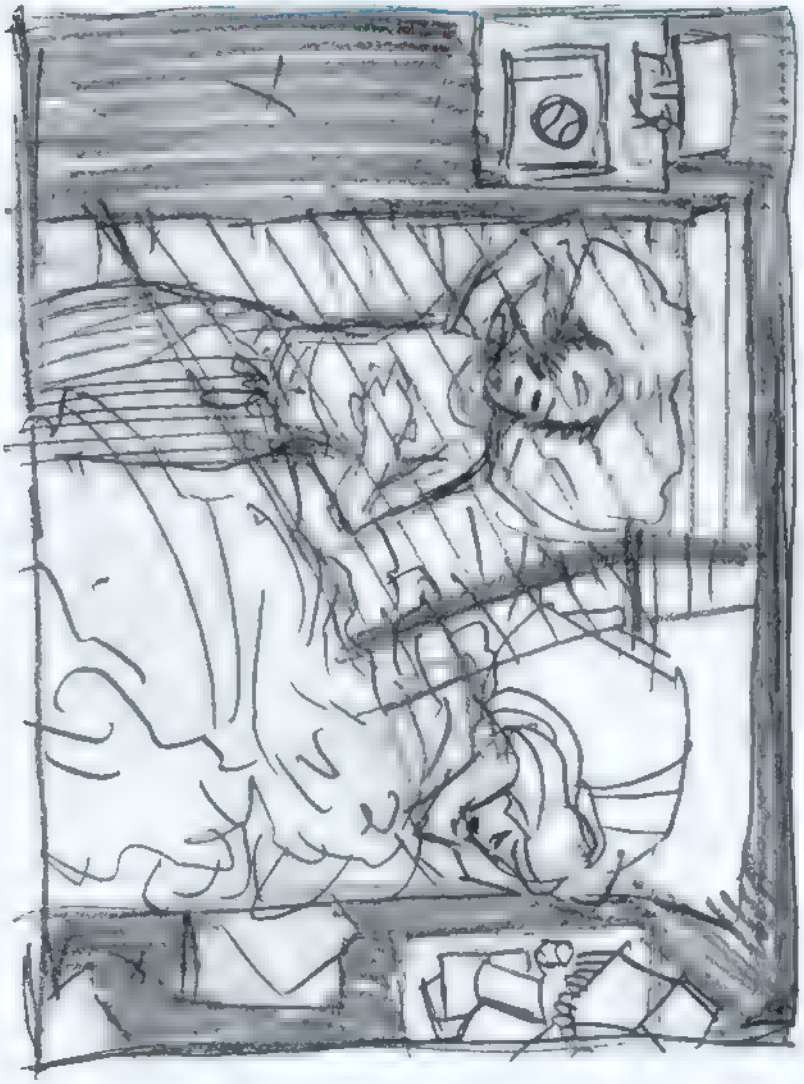
Rich!

So here's a pass at it. I was concerned at how important it was for you to have the bed be king-sized? In a vertical composition that would make the figures kinda small. Having to widen the image with the stuff on the night tables adds to that. Do you want me to do that, and fill the room with stuff?

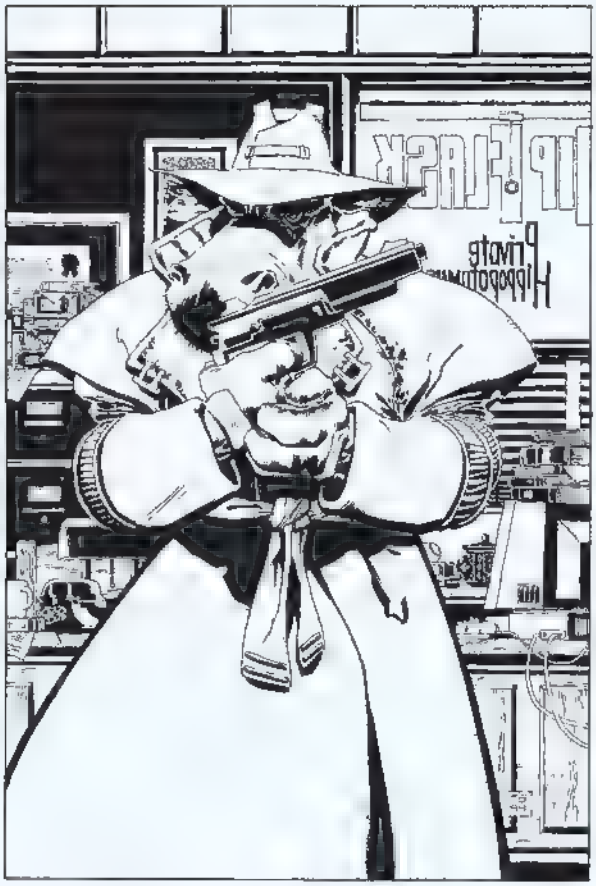
I chose in this sketch to turn the page and get in closer, is that too weird? I was also curious about the motives behind the characters' body language. She's been crying, she's turned away and stolen the covers. is he awake and staring at the ceiling? The hand behind the head implies that to me, but I wanted to ask, as you didn't say so.

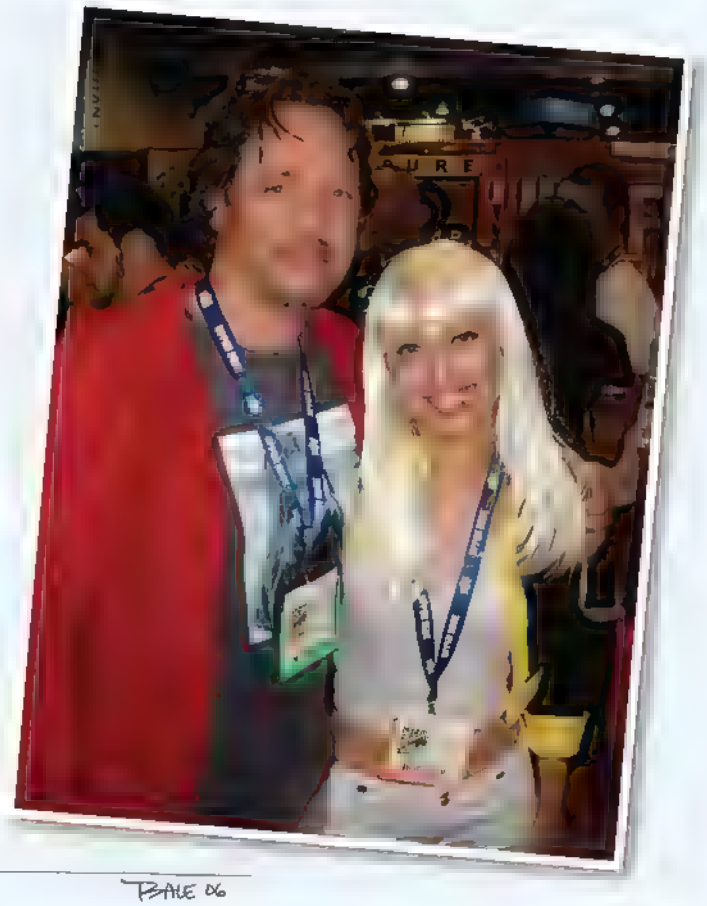
If you turn the page 90 degrees CCW, that can be half of a vertical composition, which I can do, if you want!

xxT



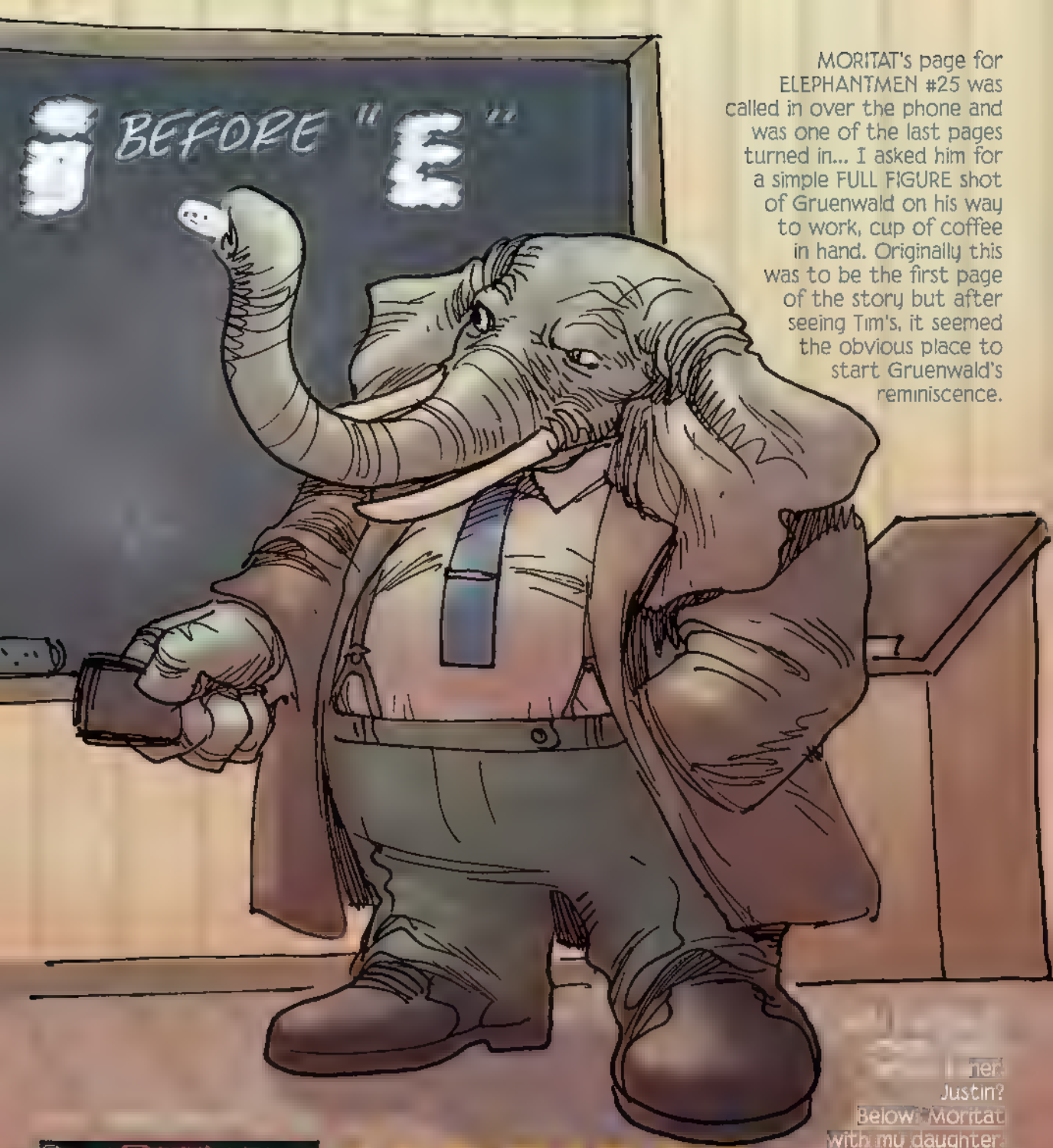
VANITY
TSALE
2010





Top Left: Tim's first HIP FLASK piece for the release of his font in 1999... JG created the ad opposite which ran in various ACCLAIM titles, and Ian Churchill created the "I BELIEVE IN MYSTERY CITY" splash page. Top Right: Tim presented this to me for my birthday in January, 2000. Left: Vanity Case for the flip cover of ELEPHANTMEN #15. Above: With the lovely Rosana, SDCC 2008.

HIP FLASK
A Gladerunner Summer Special
PULP
in Thirteen Parts
TIM SALE
FONT $69
(310) 458-9094
I BELIEVE IN MYSTERY CITY.
PULP
JEPH LOEB & TIM SALE
GREGORY WRIGHT
WWW.COMICBOOKFONTS.COM



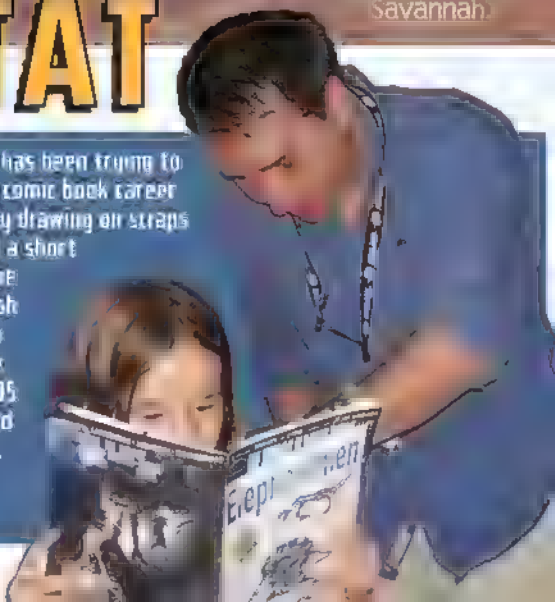
MORITAT's page for ELEPHANTMEN #25 was called in over the phone and was one of the last pages turned in... I asked him for a simple FULL FIGURE shot of Gruenwald on his way to work, cup of coffee in hand. Originally this was to be the first page of the story but after seeing Tim's, it seemed the obvious place to start Gruenwald's reminiscence.

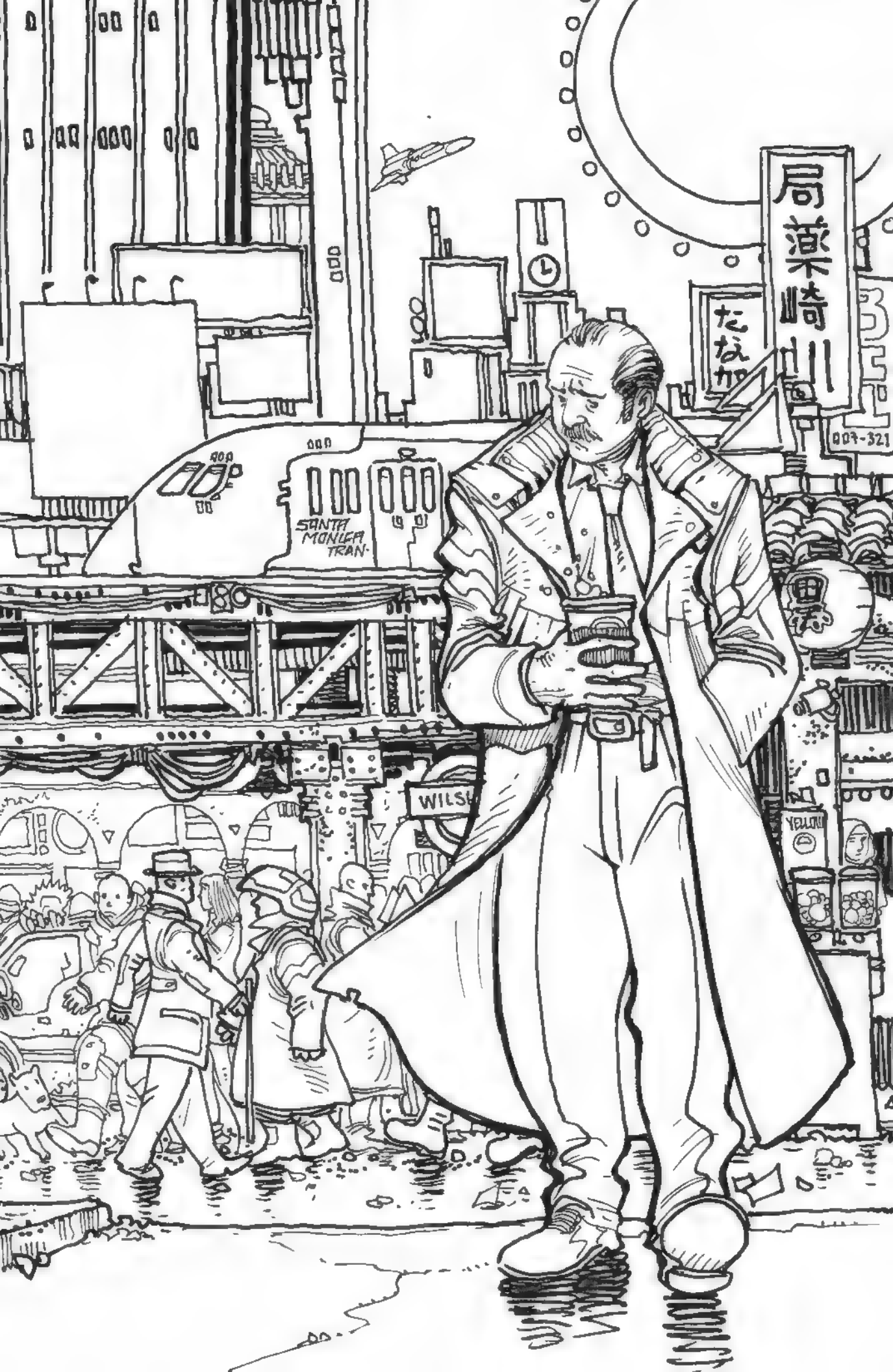
her Justin? Below: Moritat with my daughter Savannah.

MORITAT

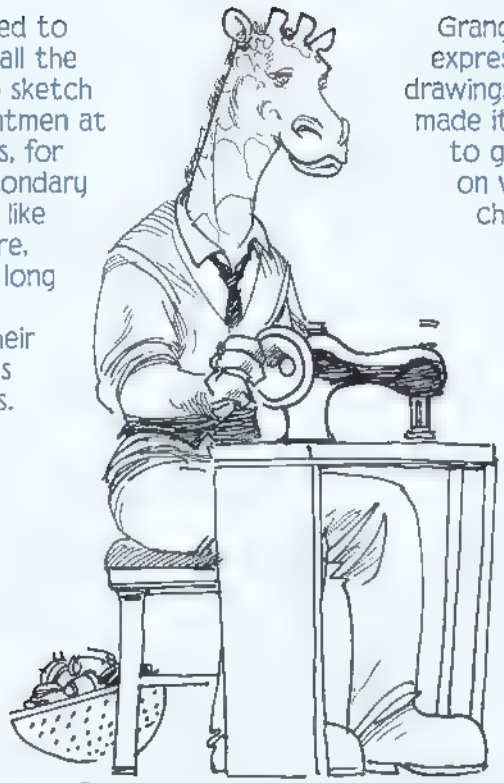
Rich! pickings

Justin Norman "Moritat" has been trying to climb the ivory tower of a comic book career for 22 years. While eagerly drawing on straps of paper and walls. He had a short spotty tenure in the marine corps, porno, writing English textbooks in China, Barfly, fisherman in Porto Portugal, dishwasher, "will draw comics" sign on the offramp of the 405 in El Segundo. He was saved by Richard Starkings, who pulled over one day... and gave him a career. He is the artist on THE SPIRIT. We think.

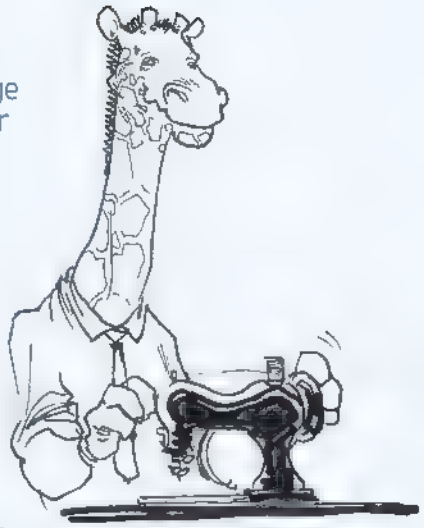



局薬崎川
SANTA MONICA TRAN
WILSH

I'm endebted to Justin, and all the artists who sketch the Elephantmen at conventions, for keeping secondary characters, like Granger here, alive in the long intervals between their appearances in the series.



Granger's playful expressions in the drawings on this page made it much easier to get a grasp on writing his character.



OPPOSITE: Moritat sent me this painting one day shortly after seeing Marian Churchland's drawing of Miki in her cab (look for it later in this section!)

AFTER MARIAN
T
ANDRE .

GABRIEL BAUTISTA

Left: Gabe outside CHALLENGERS COMICS in his hometown Chicago!

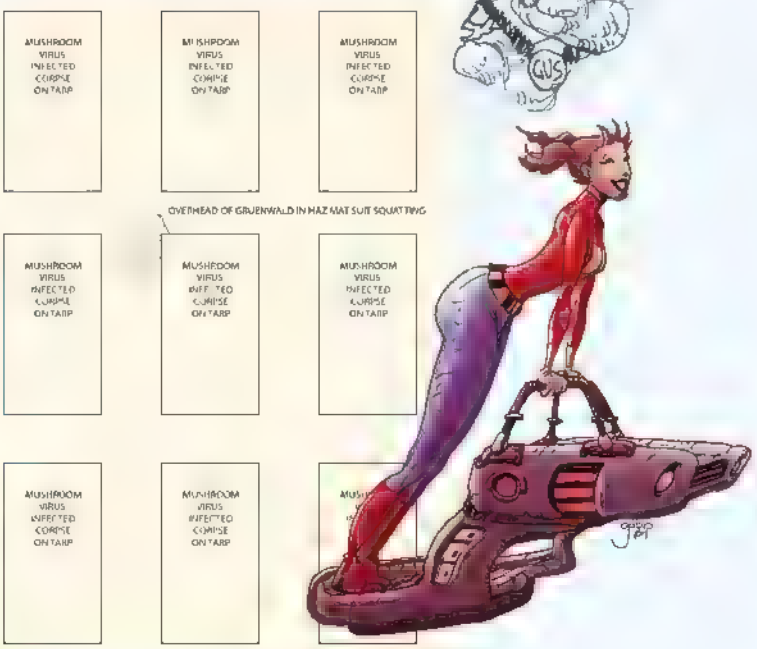
GABE! So you're looking at my mock up and saying: "WHAT TH--?!"

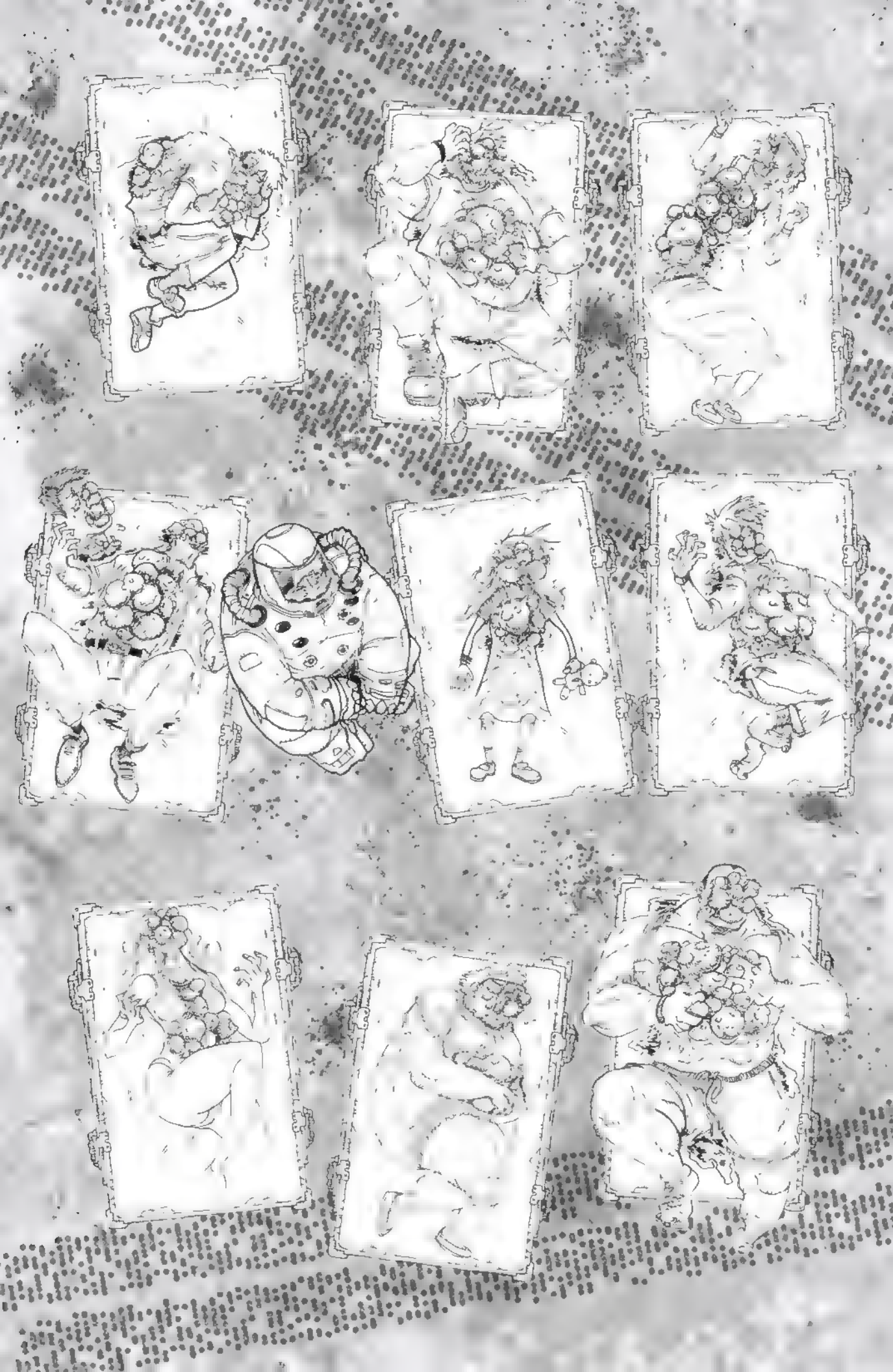
Remember the issues you coloured featuring the outbreak of the FCN virus -- fungii and mushrooms and ick bursting out of every orifice of all the tourists on the beach? This page shows nine of them -- all dead, old and young, at least one blonde in a bikini. A real mess -- make sure that each corpse is contorted so that they look like they died in pain. Hands and legs twisted after writhing in agony. Kane in ALIEN.

This issue ("THE BIG PICTURE") is a reminiscence by a human character called Gruenwald covering the history of the Elephantmen from his point of view. A handful of captions and balloons on each page will describe the events depicted. Here, Gruenwald is surveying the damage in an aircraft hangar -- the next page is a close up on the scene by Duncan Rouleau, so stick to the HazMat costume reference. There are a number of pages where the POV is from ceiling to floor, and this is one of them, natch!

Are you completely stuck on the idea of it being DIRECTLY overhead? or a lil perspective on it? Do you want the camera directly in the middle of the 9 tables? THANKS AMIGO, GABE

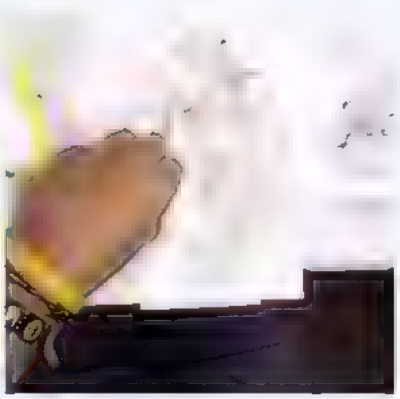
Yes -- you'll see why when the issue is collated.





Rich! pickings

Gabo is a sketching machine at shows (the sketch above was for Garrick Ellison at SDCC) and was never more so than at CZE2 in his hometown... At the very end of the Sunday show, I asked him to sketch in MY sketchbook... Gabe created the illustration opposite, now the flip cover of #30, in less than an hour. You can also find Gabe's work in POPGUN, but his tender cover of Hip & Vanity has to be my Rich! picking.



This Spread: More Mercurial Musings on Miki and Vanity spill out of Gabe's brain and into reader's sketchbooks! PAY HIM!

HIPO
LOVE
gabo
10
ELEFANTE
20

DUNCAN! Thanks for doing this...

The whole issue is a reminiscence by a human character called Gruenwald covering the history of the Elephantmen from his point of view.

Your page is a shot of the Gruenwald character in a HazMat suit inside an aircraft hanger. He is squatting down on his haunches facing the camera but looking down at the body in front of him with a sad look on his face. In front of him, lying on a body-sized rectangular sheet of tarp, we see the head and shoulders of one of the victims of the FCN virus which plagues the characters in the ELEPHANTMEN book. The head of the body is on the right of panel, the top of the torso on the left. The figures arms and hands have stiffened in angular postures, suggesting the pain that accompanied the swift death of the victim.

The victim Gruenwald is looking at is male, and covered in fungii -- see the reference from issues 14 and 15. The virus spores from one victim to the next and, once ingested, the mushrooms push their way out of the body -- ALIEN meets TOP CHEF.

DUNCAN ROULEAU

Below: Hip Hates Robots! Rou eau circa 2001!

Rich!

Rich! pickings

Duncan Rouleau is not only one of THE nicest and most generous men in comics, he is also a triple-threat. Creator, Artist AND Writer. Thank goodness he hadn't started LETTERING and publishing his own when he was looking for a home for his OGN THE NIGHTMARIST.

Rich! pickings

Claudio Sanchez plus Sheldon = KILL AUDIO from BOOM!

SHELDON VELLA AND NIKI LOPEZ

MisterSHELDON! Okay, so let's warm up for your magnum opus -- Hip and Horn boxing, Sheldon style. Full page splash -- don't forget the boxing ring ropes on fire... behind them maybe but they already have burning rope burns on faces and limbs...

Need it ASAFP... Just put down that other stuff and get on it willya? Don't be a Justin Norman.

Rich!

Hahhahaha
THIS prick.
You don't hear from him for a couple of months then he starts hammering the keyboard like an editor on her rags hahhaa. I'll do my best to have it done by next week, boss. Sooner if I can.

A couple of questions:

Am I using the same room from UNNATURAL SELECTION? Like, will my page be set in the same time & loaction as Ladronn's? That'd be rad because I like those roll bars and stuff sticking out of them, as well the b/g won't be too time consuming. Lemme know, Rickie.

And no, I'm not going to be a Justin, I'm going to be making GOOD art. haha.

Also, do you have a clean MAPPO symbol? I wanna use it at the top and it'll be easier to trace it rather than draw it from scratch.

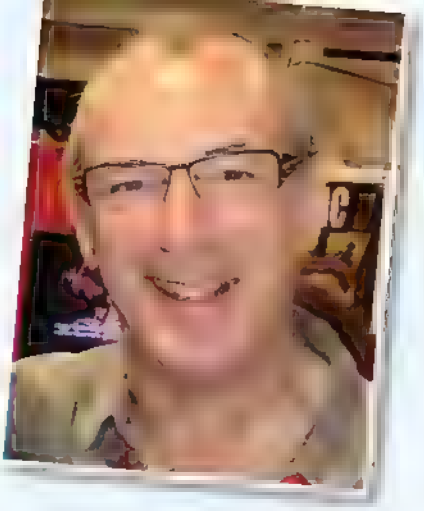
I'm entertaining the idea of including the pencils underneath the inks like Marian did, because I think my inks look a little too cartoony and I'm thinkin the pencils might add some grit. What do you think?

SHELDON xoxo

Here's a preview and the final guys. Sorry this took so long, hope it was worth the wait. Any alterations or adjustments, you can sick them up your bum.

Below Left, Sheldon's Better Half, the lovely Nikki Cook, created her own renditions of Sahara and Miki while Mister Sheldon was signing SUPERTRON posters and pretending to be a Rock Star.
Below: Sheldon does Miki!

DAVE GIBBONS



DAVE! What I'm looking for is a World War One/ CHARLEY'S WAR/ROGUE TROOPER style landscape with our three "heroes" -- Hip Flask (hippo), Obadiah Horn (rhino) and Ebony Hide (elephant). You can add other Elephantmen (crocs, warthogs, zebras) back in the line if you want, but these guys should be up front, one after the other. Hip usually gets center stage so maybe on this one it could be Ebony, the elephant.

They are trudging full figure across the devastated French landscape, one in front of the other through mud, remains of stone walls, barbed wire, smouldering potholes and desperate human (not soldiers, civilian) remains... not gory, just maybe a hand sticking out of the mud, a baby doll with one eye half burned and so forth. On the horizon maybe a burning tank or building. Maybe our POV is looking slightly down on them from slightly up above, so we can see the battlefield nicely.

Each of our soldiers carry heavy guns and backpacks with samurai swords in sheaths on their backs (see sketches). They do not wear helmets.

The tone of the page I'm looking for is half ROGUE TROOPER (I always remember that first promotional shot of ROGUE, it was grim, dirty and oily and really made you feel uncomfortable), because these are tough super soldiers, and half the shot of the somewhat sad looking Tommies in the trenches that Brian Bolland did for his portfolio years ago. Let me know if you need that as reference -- it is in both his books, STRIPS and ART OF. Perhaps one of our guys is looking straight at camera with a sense of judgment, even hatred in his eyes, although none of them are scowling, just grim.

This issue is a reminiscence by a human character, called Gruenwald, covering the history of the Elephantmen from his point of view. Captions on this page will cover the war -- Africa versus China in Europe, a war fought on the ground.

Rich!

Rich --

I'd like to do the page landscape rather than portrait format, if that's not a prob...

Best, Dave

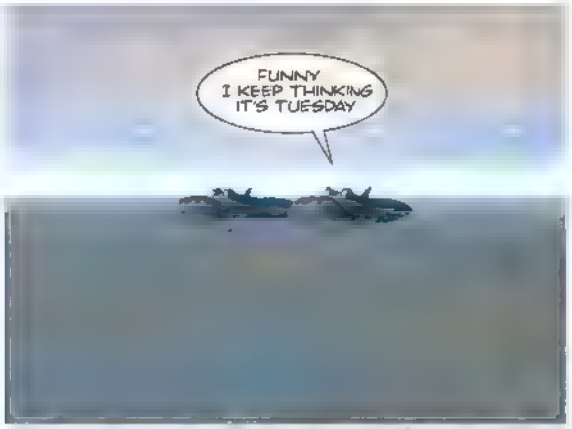
If so, I'll be tempted to make it a double page spread!

Okay, but if I do decide to do it in that format, I'll just charge you for one page. What a pal, eh?

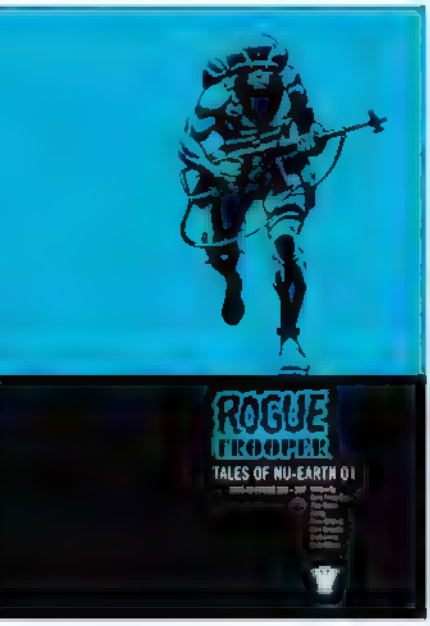
I'll be doing it digitally at hi-res, so no problem. I intend to put a fair amount of that ROGUE TROPPER grunge on there, too, although it'll be a digital texture rather than a Woolie's tea-towel scrap dipped in ink!

Best, Dave

I bet that's how you've named your photoshop brush!



FROM DAVE GIBBONS (AFTER THE FAMOUS PUNCH CARTOON)



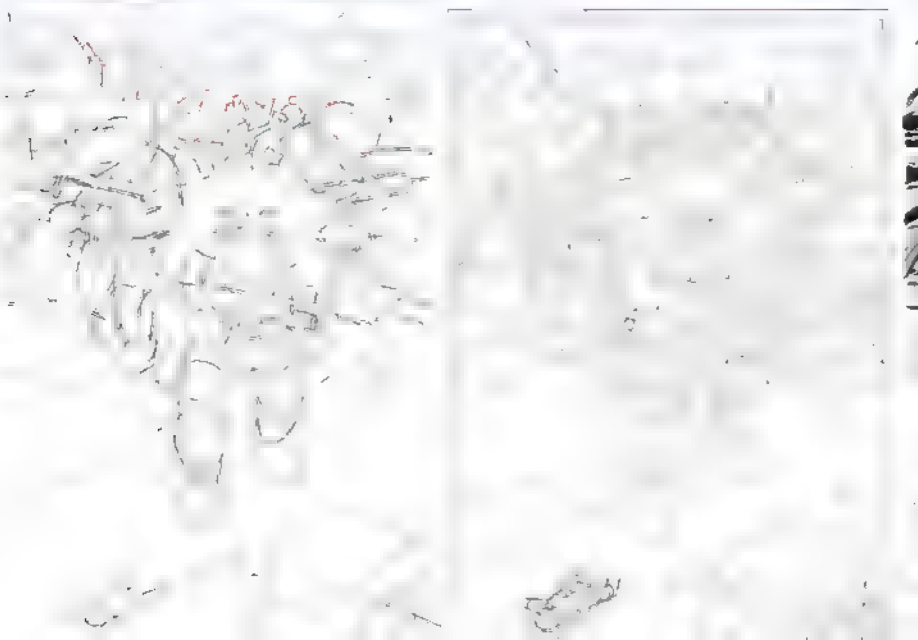
Rich! pickings

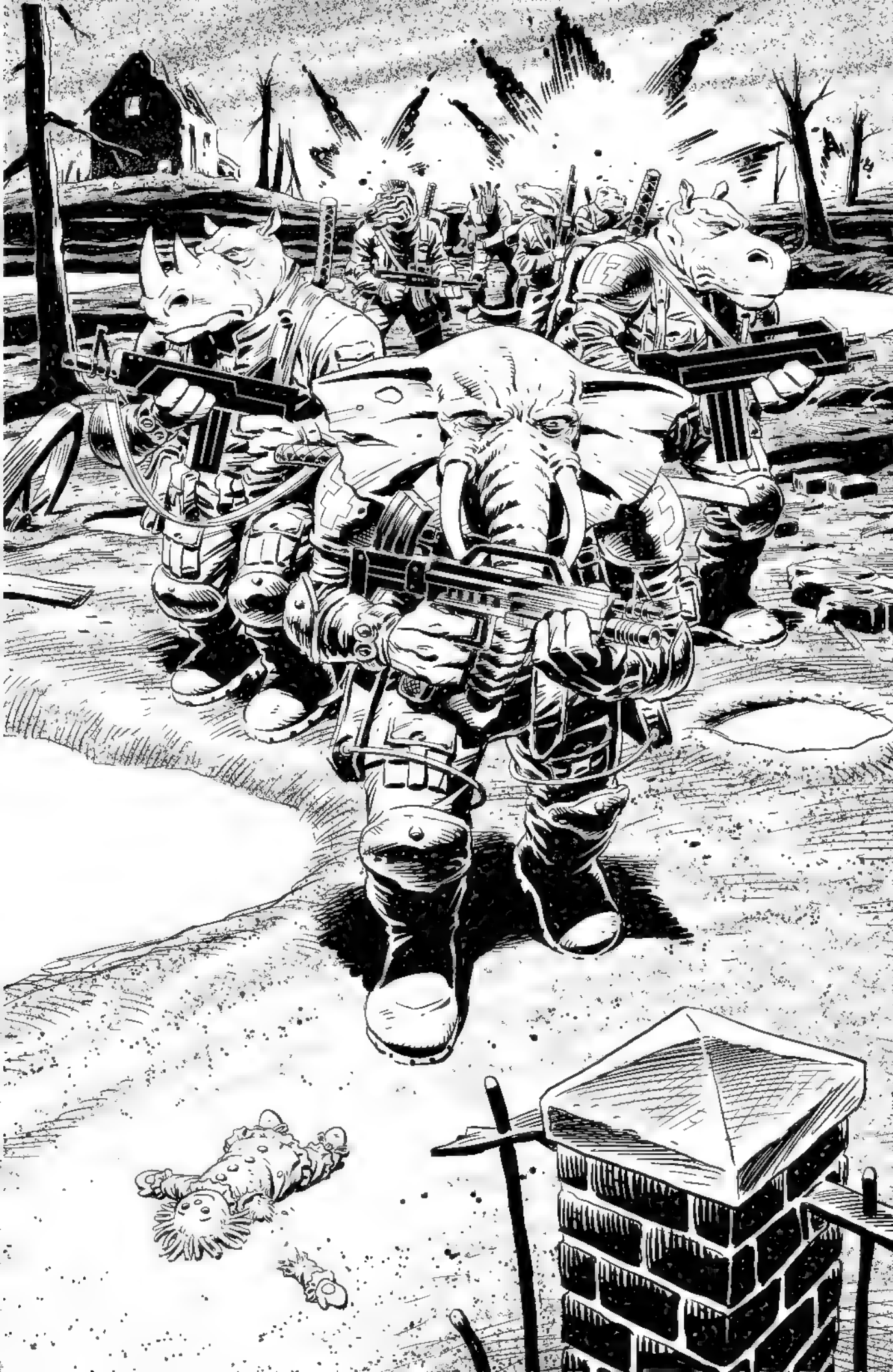
Although WATCHMEN is perhaps quintessential Dave Gibbons, those of us raised on a steady diet of Thrill Power in the pages of 2000AD still have a soft spot for Dave's early work on DAN DARE and ROGUE TROOPER. Dave mastered working in Black and White long before he fell under the spell of John Higgins' colour palette. Track down the first ROGUE TROOPER collection and see for yourself.

Dave sent me these warmup sketches and work-in-progress drawings specifically for inclusion in this collection... like much of Dave's current work, it is created digitally from scratch -- pencil never hits paper athough stylus does touch screen. Next time you see Dave at a show, make sure you tell him why he really should draw a whole issue of ELEPHANTMEN sometime!

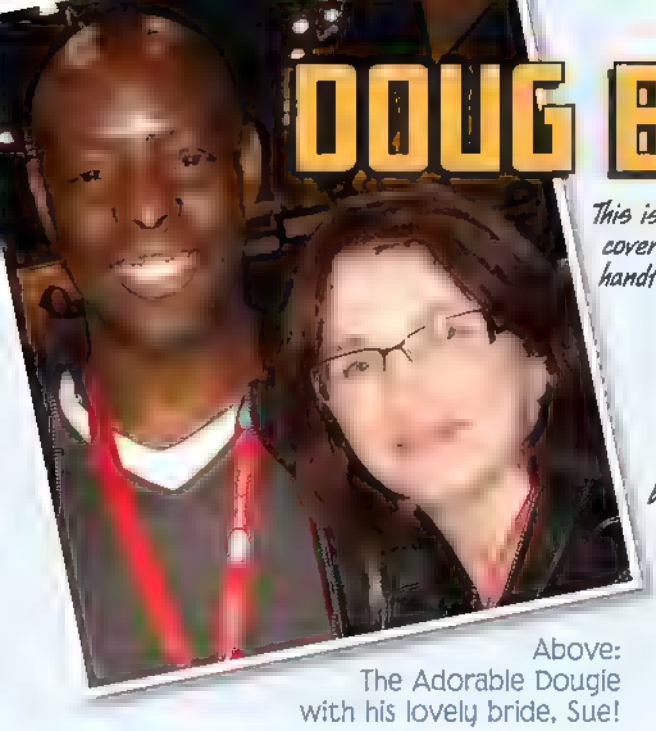
Rich!

Opposite: Is that Martha Washington's dolly Dave slipped into the bottom eft there?





DOUG BRAITHWAITE



Above:
The Adorable Dougie with his lovely bride, Sue!

This issue is a reminiscence by a human character called Gruenwald covering the history of the Elephantmen from his point of view. A handful of captions on each page will describe the events depicted.

Your page is a shot of Gruenwald as a UN soldier during the defeat of the Elephantmen. I'll send you reference of Gruenwald, but note that your version will be Gruenwald as a young man -- keep the tash! Think of me when I worked at Marvel UK... Gruenwald should like he could be my older brother! We're looking at three UN soldiers FULL FIGURE -- Gruenwald front and center. They have descended into the MAPPO headquarters -- metallic shadowy high tech corridors -- routing out Elephantmen. One of the soldiers behind Gruenwald is looking at a fallen Croc Elephantman... his gun raised and pointed at the croc's head, cautiously wondering if he is dead... (HE IS)

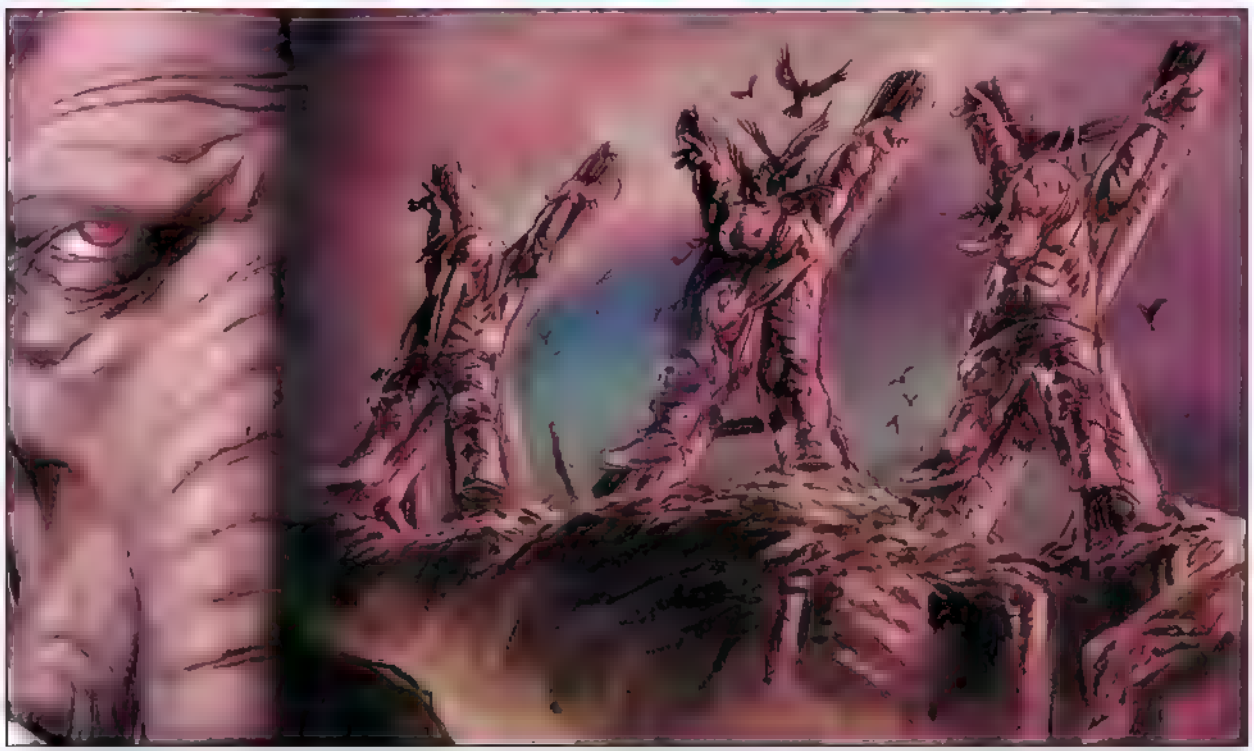
The croc should be wearing the same kind of suit worn by Hip and Horn in the reference to follow this email.

Gruenwald is looking and pointing directly at us (actually at the character Sahara on the next page, drawn by Gary Erskine), his other hand holds his gun. The second soldier looks concerned and has his gun at the ready.

Rich! Riches

Many years ago, when I worked at Marvel UK, Dougie came to me at the tender age of 15 with recommendations from V FOR VENDETTA's David Lloyd and WATCHMEN's Dave Gibbons... I put him to work on THUNDERCATS and ACTION FORCE (GI JOE for Brits!) and watched in awe as Dougie's work went from strength to strength. Of course, if I have to choose a favourite, it has to be the strip he just completed for me for HERO COMICS #2, a five page piece coloured by Ulises Arreola. You can see a preview of Dougie's gorgeous wash artwork below...

Rich!



GARY ERSKINE

GARY! Okay, so, Sahara is standing in front of a restoration tank, in which we see a hippo Elephantman, eyes closed, hanging in the water like Luke in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. The hippo should have wounds on his body which are healing in the tank -- cuts and perhaps a bullethole or burn. Just as in the Boo Cook page, he is hooked up to tubes and feeds. He is naked. Across one of his eyes, we see claw marks. Elephantmen are 7-8 feet tall. Big heads on heavyset bodies. NOTE: Our Elephantmen have THREE fingers and ONE thumb on each hand, FOUR toes on each foot. Other restoration tanks are visible on either side and should be occupied by other Elephantmen if we can see that much, but this is not essential. Very high tech.

Sahara is holding up a hand in earnest. She is actually facing down some UN soldiers who want to shoot the Elephantmen tanks full of holes. Sahara is 19 years old here, young, shapely and beautiful. She is in the UN togs in the reference I sent you. Please show her FULL FIGURE, hippo ditto!

Rich!

Rich! pickings

If you were born in the British Isles before 1970, and you loved comics, then DAN DARE was practically part of your DNA. Gary got to work on the series when it was revived by Garth Ennis for VIRGIN COMICS in 2007, and you can still find the collection, from DYNAMITE, behind a lush Dave Gibbons cover.

GARYERSKINE@BLOGSPOT.COM: Richard Starkings, founder of COMICRAFT approached me (pop-up chat on Facebook) last month and asked me if I would like to provide a page for issue 25 of ELEPHANTMEN. As a former Marvel UK artist, I couldn't refuse and ELEPHANTMEN is one of the few books I read and love. What an opportunity!

The story for this particular issue was all flashbacks to key moments in the Elephantmen timeline. My page focused on Hip in his restoration tank of the recovery bay. An exciting stand-off image was called for.

I decided to draw each element seperately to allow Richard to do some editorial tweaking on figure sizes, proportions and general composition. Hip was obviously in the background with Sahara middleground and the guns of the soldiers immediate foreground. A fairly familiar scene, I'm sure. Was fortunate enough to have Dougie Braithwaite provide the reverse POV of the soldiers on the previous page (introducing their guns especially well) and that allowed me to crop tight on the barrels for my piece and still be able to tell the story. There was some photo reference used on Sahara to get the 16mm lens effect I wanted (not quite fish-eye lens but still rather forced view) Delighted with the final pose..

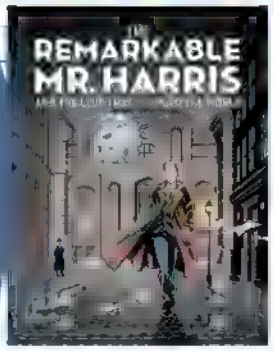
The final angled skew on the overall image was to inject a little more of a dynamic quality to a rather static scene. The wonderful colours were added by Gregory Wright who worked up some magic on this page.

With a movie deal already in discussion, we hope to see more of ELEPHANTMEN in the future and I would certainly love to do more on the series. Really helps promote the cyberpunk hardware approach to my art. So little opportunity for me to pencil as much as I used to. Enjoying every chance I get now.

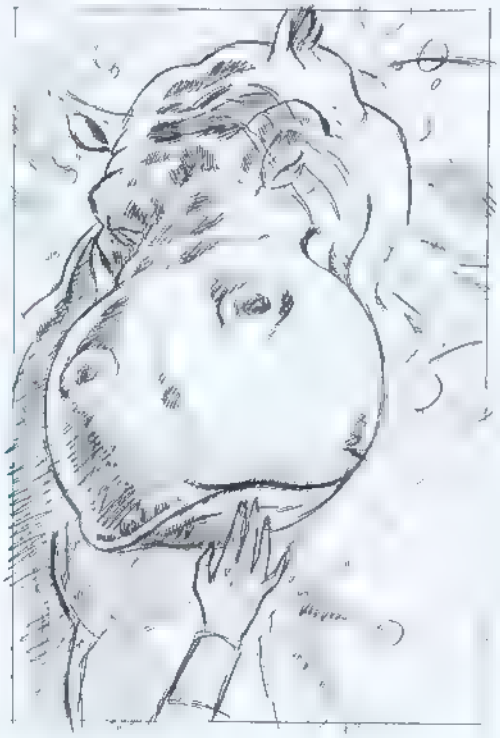
STEVE BUCCELLATO

Rich! pickings

COMICRAFT and Steve's ELECTRIC CRAYON coloring house were studio mates in the mid '90s but Steve was quite rightly not content to be known for his colouring work alone... after writing and illustrating his own image book, WEASEL GUY, he went on to create BATTLE OF THE BANDS for TOKYO POP and, more recently THE REMARKABLE MR. HARRIS for Rotary International -- and he STILL found time to draw Hip for ELEPHANTMEN #25! Another Triple Threat!



I had seen this beautiful drawing on Steve's A BUCCE OF POWER blog and asked him to draw the close up of Hip in the same style... Steve and I live just a few minutes from one another so I probably described this to him over the phone or perhaps over a crepe at KC's Crêpes on Lincoln Boulevard. The drawing of Vanity, below, dates back to the weekend Steve and I shared at booth at WizardWorld Chicago, 2003!



I was lucky enough to share table space with the overwhelmingly talented Whilce Portacio, and his lovely wife, Jo, at the New York Comic Con in 2009. Whilce generously agreed to create a page for #25 in exchange for some, GASP!, pen lettering I did on two commissions he created for a fan at the Baltimore show later that year... all he needed was a verbal description and he was away... the only email I sent him read:

After we spoke about Gruenwald looking up, I realized that he might be looking up at a helicopter that is going to be airlifting the Elephantman...

Gruenwald could be looking up at camera, waving the helicopter winch down. The Elephantman should be in the cage stretcher as illustrated by Ladrönn.

Rich!

Jo presented me with the finished art at the Long Beach Comic Con in January of 2010!

WHILCE PORTACIO

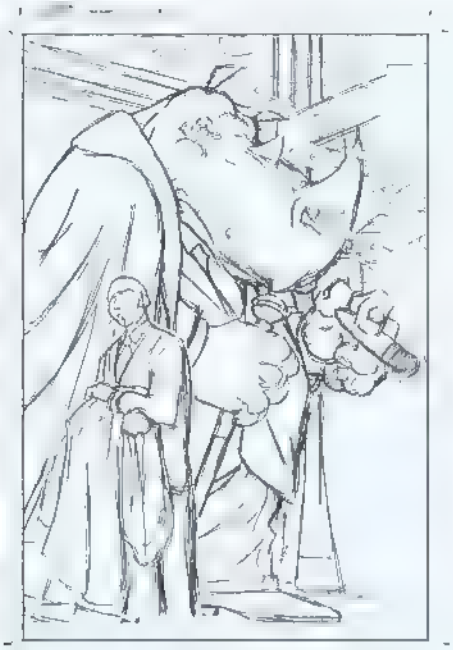
Rich! pickings

I don't think Whilce and I ever talked during his run on WildStorm's late '90s reboot of IRON MAN for Marvel's HEROES REBORN line of books, but all those books, including Jim Lee's FANTASTIC FOUR, Loeb & Churchill's AVENGERS and Loeb & Liefeld's CAPTAIN AMERICA taught Marvel's classic heroes a few new tricks and allowed everyone at Comicraft to show comic book readers everywhere what we could do. When I'm appearing at shows in support of ELEPHANTMEN, I'm often brought a huge stack of HEROES REBORN titles to sign, and Whilce's IRON MAN looks as brilliant and beautiful today as it did back then. Track down the recent paperback collection or hop on eBay and snap up a set of Whilce's six issues

IAN CHURCHILL

IAN! What I'd like from you is a full figure shot of Horn, dressed to impress and intimidate. He's put some clothes on for once and popped down to the Information Agency to complain about the recent goings on. He does not look happy, his eyes are smouldering with displeasure... Sahara has been frightened and he's looking for someone to blame.

He should be wearing a business suit and a coat that's draped around his shoulders, very posh-like... maybe a walking cane for show? Cigar, naturally. Purchase stands beside him, in suit, black greatcoat folded over his arms, a little butler-like... they're wrapped up because it's raining outside. It's always raining outside in MY head.



The setting is Gruenwald's office at the Information Agency, but all we need to see is that they have come through two large glass doors. Think of a newspaper editor's office in a movie -- he wants to see outside the office even when the doors are closed.

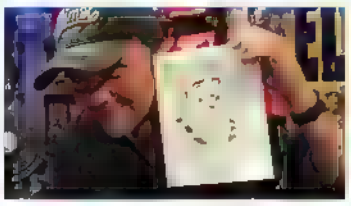
The whole issue is a reminiscence by a human character called Gruenwald covering the history of the Elephantmen from his point of view. A handful of captions on this page will describe the events depicted.

Rich!

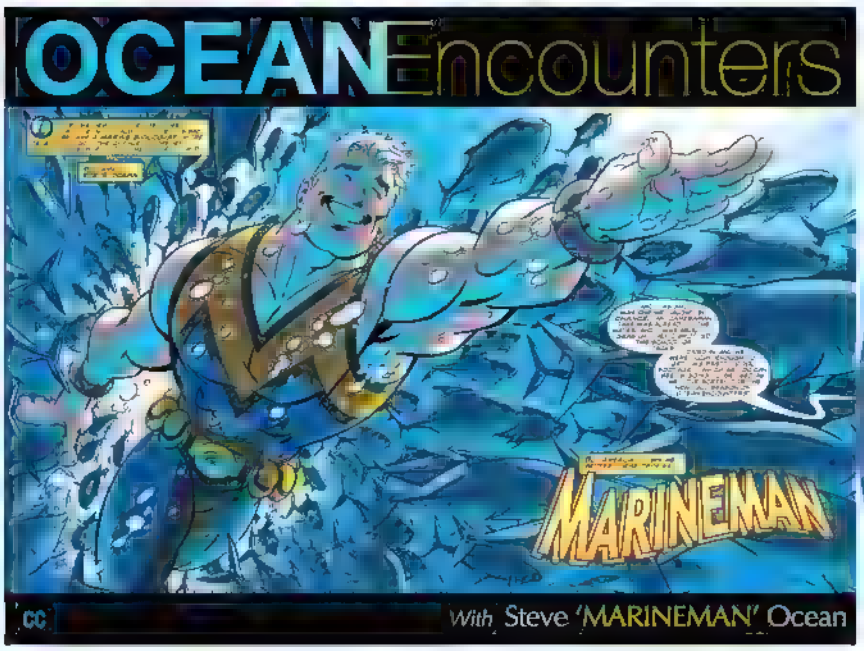
Hey grate mate,

One, do you like this composition and two, does it give you enough balloon room?

IAN



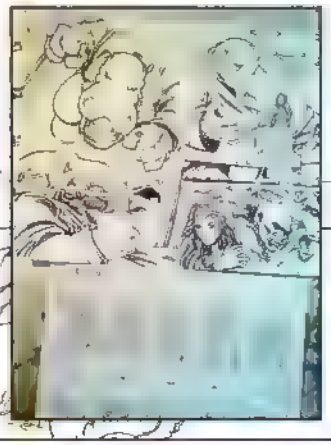
Above Left: During Ian's "Hanging-around-the-Comicraft-studio" phase in the late '90s, he would sometimes present me with a drawing he'd been doodling... this is "I BELIEVE IN MYSTERY CITY," in reference to the first page of Loeb & Sale's BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN ("I BELIEVE IN GOTHAM CITY.") I'm sure it stuck in my head and eventually became the page you now see opposite...

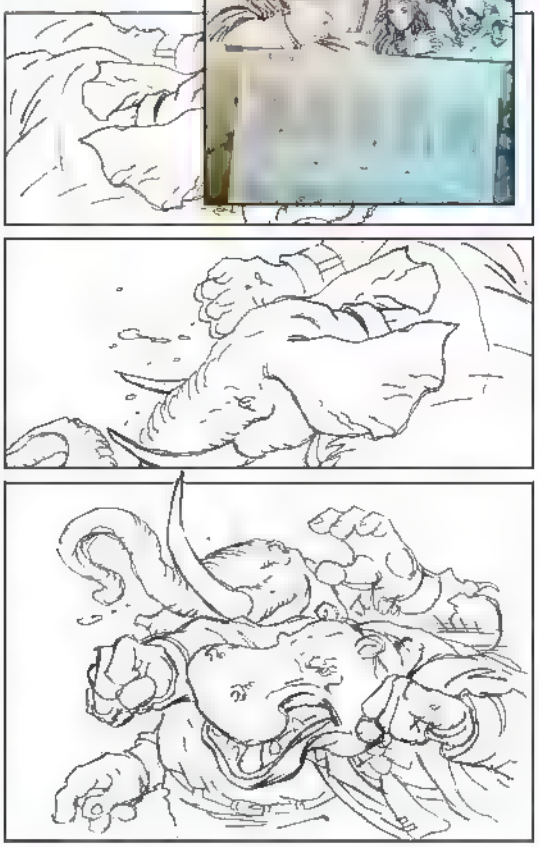


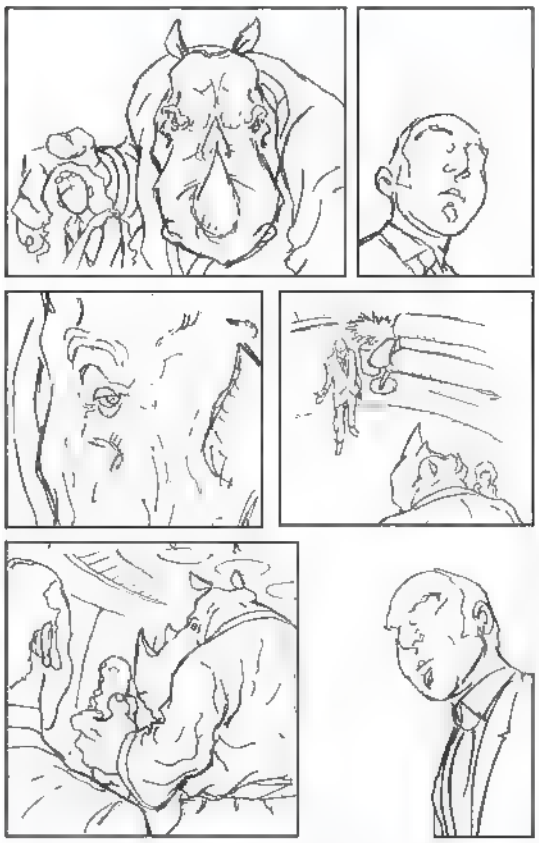
Rich! pickings

As much as I loved Ian's work on, ahem, HIP FLASK, HULK, UNCANNY X-MEN, THE AVENGERS and CABLE or his AWESOME books COVEN and LIONHEART, you cannot find a book that Ian has put more of his heart and soul in than MARINEMAN. Every page is full of joy, look for new issues at your local comic book store every month!

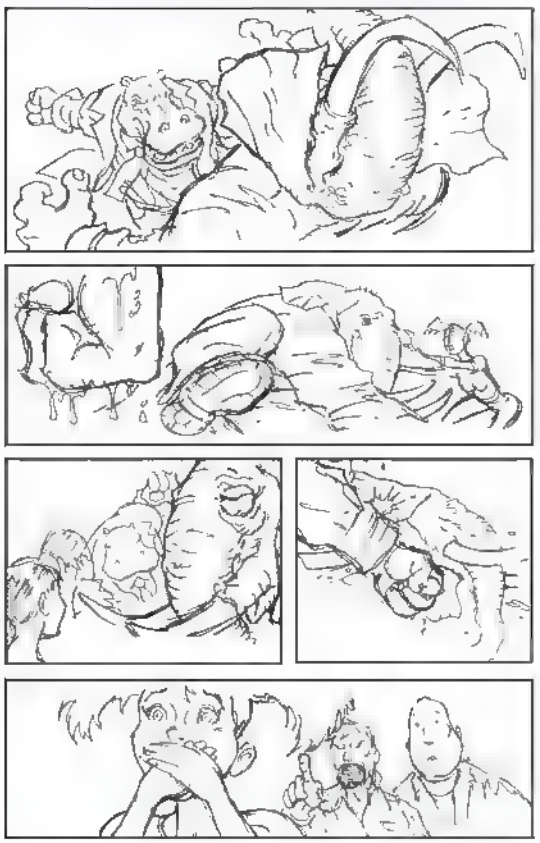
MORITAT's drawing arm refused to cooperate with his desire to draw 2 monthly books, so I asked my grate mate, Ian Churchill, for help...

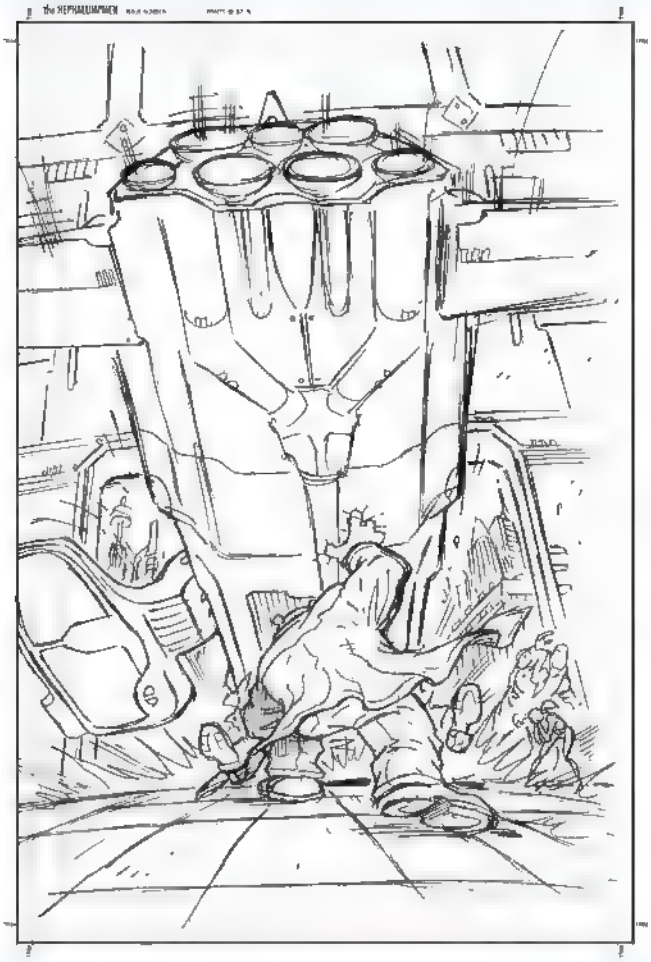




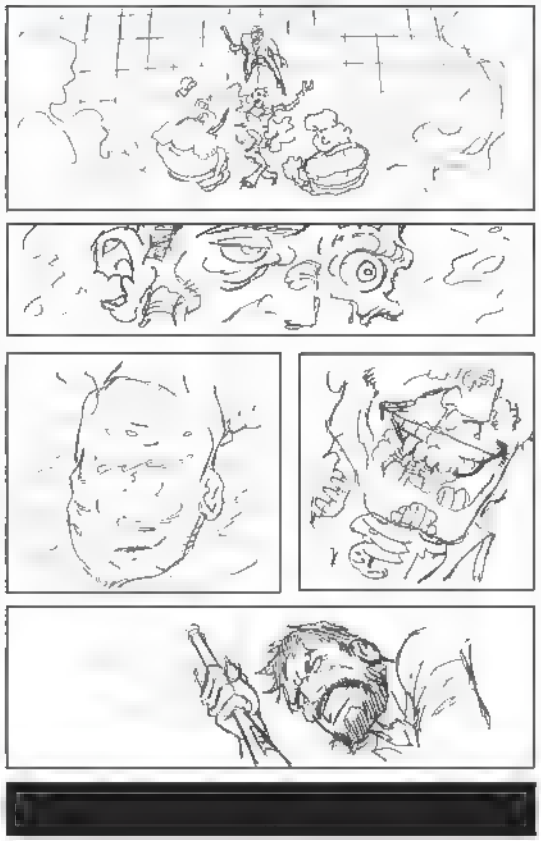


Within just a couple of days, Ian produced these beautiful layouts for Moritat to use as guides -- some artists would call them pencils!





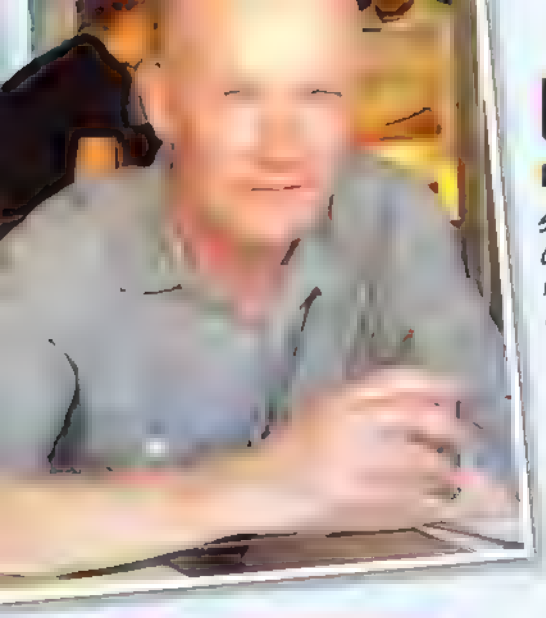
Ian's splash page of Hip smashing the SkyCab was so tightly drawn I asked boisterous Boo Cook to render it in ink (see opposite) and thereby preserve its splendiferousness.



Above: The last couple of page breakdowns of #24.
Below & Opposite, more of Ian's doodles... the biro illustration of Sahara became the cover of #19.

Bathtub colours by Boo!

ian
churchill
2005



SHAKY KANE

SHAKY! This whole issue is a reminiscence by a human character called Gruenwald covering the history of the Elephantmen from his point of view. A handful of captions and balloons on each page will describe the events depicted. Your page follows on from Ian's page showing Horn and his assistant.

We now see Horn's head and shoulders filling the page, with Gruenwald's head and shoulders looking small but defiant in the foreground. Gruenwald has just listened to Horn complaining about his FBI-type department but gives him no heed, he faces us with a no-nonsense expression, the back of his head pointed towards Horn's smouldering face (not Literally smouldering, just repressed anger).

Gruenwald should be looking down, not at us -- he should be in shirt and tie with braces evident. More Gruenwald and Horn reference to follow.

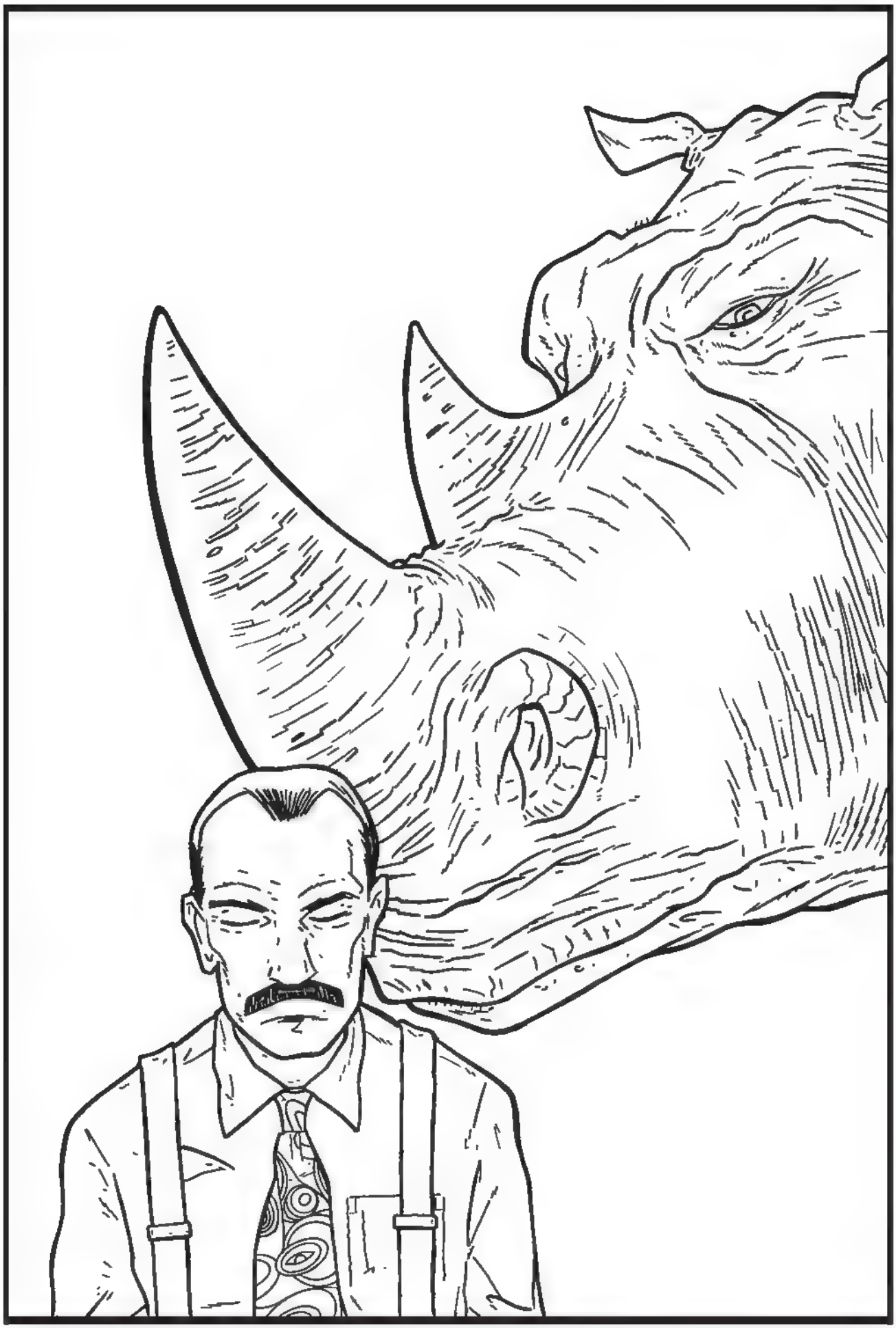
Rich!

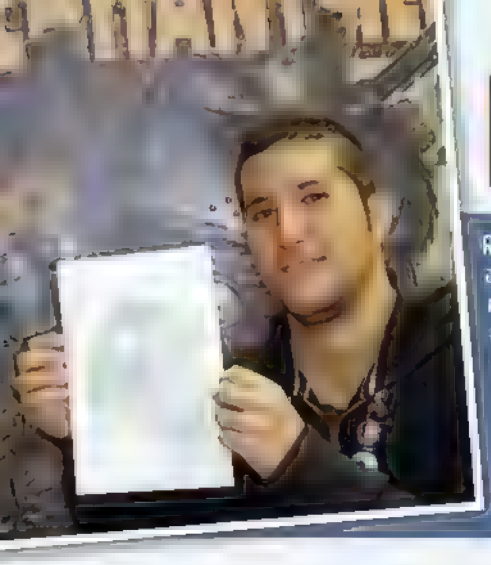
HINE AND KANE'S

THE BULLETPROOF COFFIN

Rich! pickings

I was a regular reader of Paul Gravett's ESCAPE magazine in the mid 80's when I first came across Shaky Kane's work... even then, his drawings seemed to belong to the X-RAY SPEES ads you'd find in the back of Marvel Comics in the 60's... there was something eerily timeless about his work and no one seemed to know who he was or where he came from. Little did I know, when I bullied Dave Hine into doing a creator owned title at Image that Dave would track down Shaky and collaborate on their brilliant series THE BULLETPROOF COFFIN. Shaky is currently working on ELEPHANTMEN #33. If you see Shaky at a show, ask him if he has copies of MONSTER TRUCKS!





RULO TREVIÑO

Rulo Treviño was introduced to me by Ladrönn many years ago at San Diego Comic Con... his studio in Mexico was responsible for the colouring assistance of Ladrönn's first collaboration with Jodorowsky, FINAL INCAL TOME ONE. But Rulo is not just a colourist, he is an artist in his own right: he surprised me at Comic Con in 2008 with the illustration of Hip and Vanity you see at the bottom of this page. He has created his own graphic novels and currently posts his comic strips @ coolchickens.com. Check them out!

Rich! pickings

RULO! Hey, sorry for the delay... What I'd like from you is a shot of Sahara in the desert -- similar to the ones Ladrönn has drawn in the past -- but this one is an electronic poster in the street, and, of course, it's raining much as it is in BLADE RUNNER...

The poster is an ad for Sahara's line of clothing, DESERT BREEZES, so leave room at the top and bottom for logo and copy...

The poster should be perpendicular to the viewer and should fill most of the page, no need to see very much of the street -- just the idea that the poster is almost like a hologram -- projected between two robotic strips -- like the top and bottom weights on a wall hanging suspended in the air, several feet from the street, with no other visible means of support...

If you like, color the poster image yourself in your own inimitable style, and our regular colourist will handle the other elements, giving it that degree of separation.

Let me know if you have any other questions -- book is standard US comic book size.

Rich!

Hey Rich,

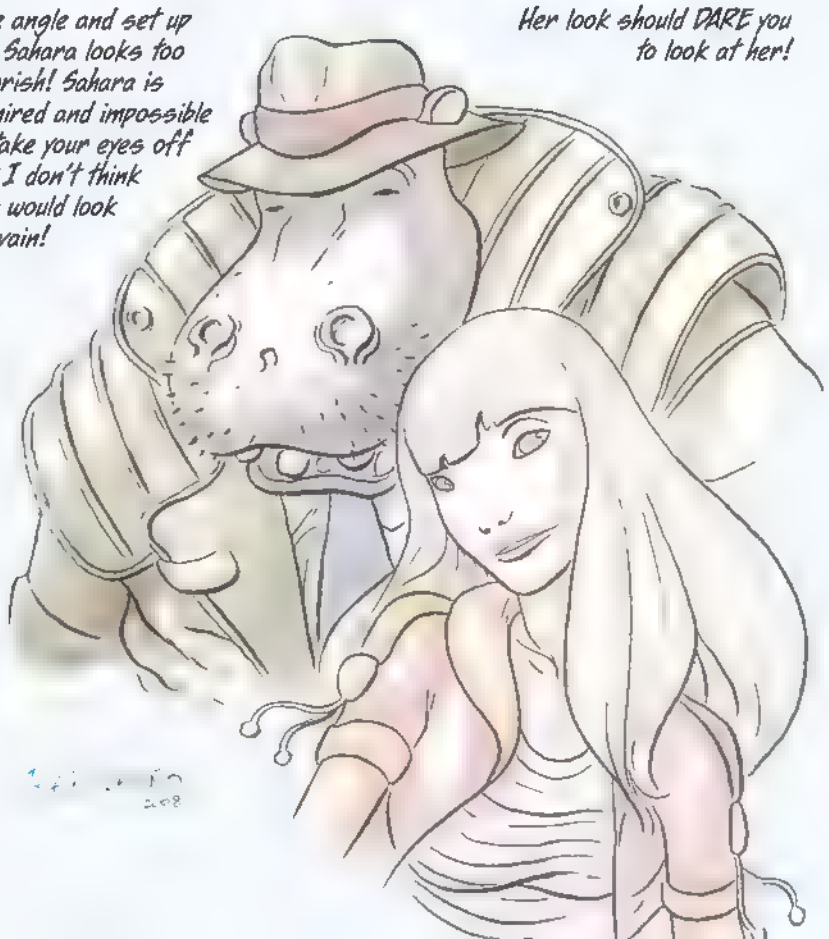
I'll do my best to finish it as soon as possible. Is it ok this Friday?

Let me share with you my webcomic that I'm doing nowadays. http://www.coolchickens.com/en/

Best! RULO

Nice angle and set up but Sahara looks too whorish! Sahara is admired and impossible to take your eyes off but I don't think she would look so vain!

Her look should DARE you to look at her!



2010

BOO COOK

BOO! I need a page showing Tusk as he was in his padded cell, in the straitjacket, with Gruenwald, a concerned expression on face, looking in through the window (behind Tusk) Full figure. Gruenwald ref to follow.

Rich!

From BOOCOOK.BLOGSPOT.COM: "Don't Say That You LOVE Me!" Here's one for all you Fleetwood Mac fans out there... TUSK! this image was for a splash page in issue #25 of ELEPHANTMEN, "The Big Picture;" a whole issue of splash pages by some of the biggest names in the biz -- Dave Gibbons, Ian Churchill, Tim Sale, Dougie Braithwaite, David Hine, Shaky Kane, Tom Scioli, to name but a few, alongside the usual E'men regulars; Moritat, Ladronn, Churchland, Szymanowicz, Burnham, Bautista, and Steen!

When I heard Rich was gonna be doing a splash page issue, I sent him a rough sketch of zebra based E'man Trench, as I'd just purchased a plastic zebra. It didn't fit in with Rich's story plan tho', so I ended up doing a panel of poor old Mr. Tusk, rest his slavering, snorting soul... the final version in the comic was lovingly and spectacularly coloured by the exceptional hand of Greg Wright, with whom I'm currently working on WAR TOYS 2: ENEMY SPECIES!

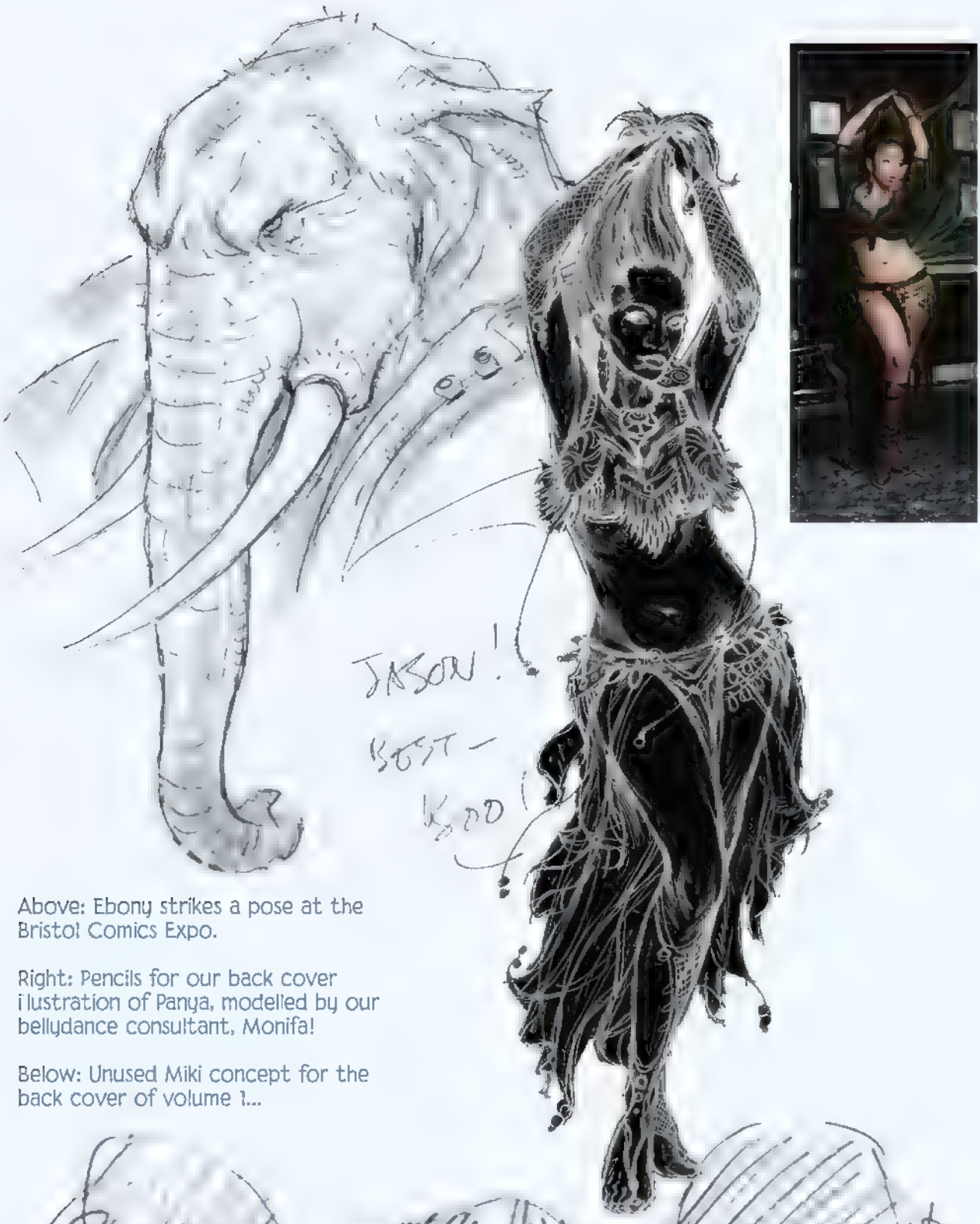
Rich! pickings

Take a look at Boo's right forearm, above, and you'll see his man love for Jack Kirby in the form of a tattoo based on the King's 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY... and when you see Boo's bride, Gemma Bruden, at a show, be sure to ask to see her Ewoks. Tattoos!

This Page: You Must NOT Miss Boo's best work to date, ELEPHANTMEN: ENEMY SPECIES, coming to two issues of ELEPHANTMEN soon!

Right: Boo's colour sketch of the cover of issue #25 (see finished pencils opposite and finished piece overleaf), long before I conceived the idea of it being a jam issue. Boo was obviously thinking about Blueberry jam.

Below: Ebony sketch for a fan at MCM Expo, May 2010.



Above: Ebony strikes a pose at the Bristol Comics Expo.

Right: Pencils for our back cover illustration of Panya, modelled by our bellydance consultant, Monifa!

Below: Unused Miki concept for the back cover of volume 1...

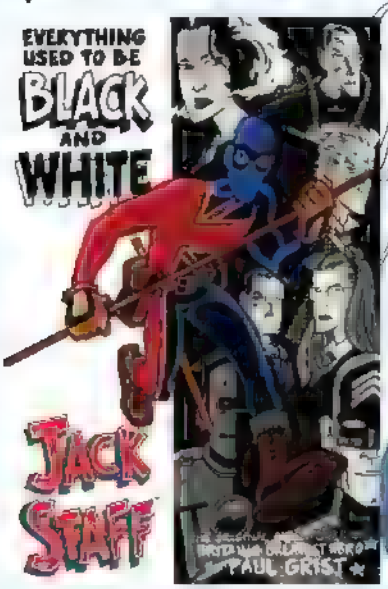
PAUL! Your page features a character only seen in Moritat's Con sketches so far -- an Elephantman that fancies himself as a Deepak Chopra and has travelled to India to spread his word and be worshipped as a God. Note Elephantmen are about 8 feet tall and there heads are massive -- think of the Hulk's proportions with a big animal head. Only four (not five) fingers on each hand (three and a thumb). Our Elephantgod Guru should look beatific!

The audience are dressed in saffron robes, some with head shaved or those little ponytails, backs toward us. On either side of our fella are two gorgeous Norah Jones type dark-haired Indian girls in saris with the dots on their foreheads... his little harem of admirer/devotees!

He is sitting on a raised dais in front of a screen with symbols that may suggest his head is glowing or haloed -- he is centered in front of it but we see that it is just a design on a screen. We are outdoors in daylight.

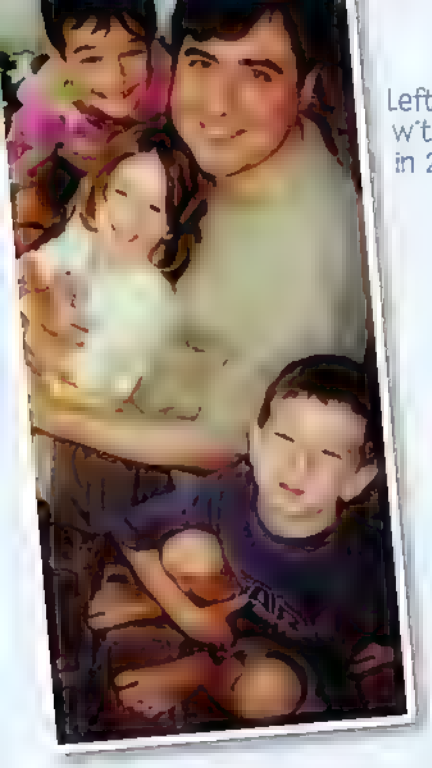
Rich!

PAUL GRIST



Rich! pickings

My favourite Image Comic, and the favourite title of many British creators, has to be Paul Grist's JACK STAFF. Paul's affection for comics, and specifically for the British comics of the '60s and '70s -- as well as British TV of the same era -- makes me feel all warm and fluffy every time I read a new issue. Great storytelling, great art, each issue is a joy.



Left: Ladrönn w'th my kids in 2002

LADRÖNN

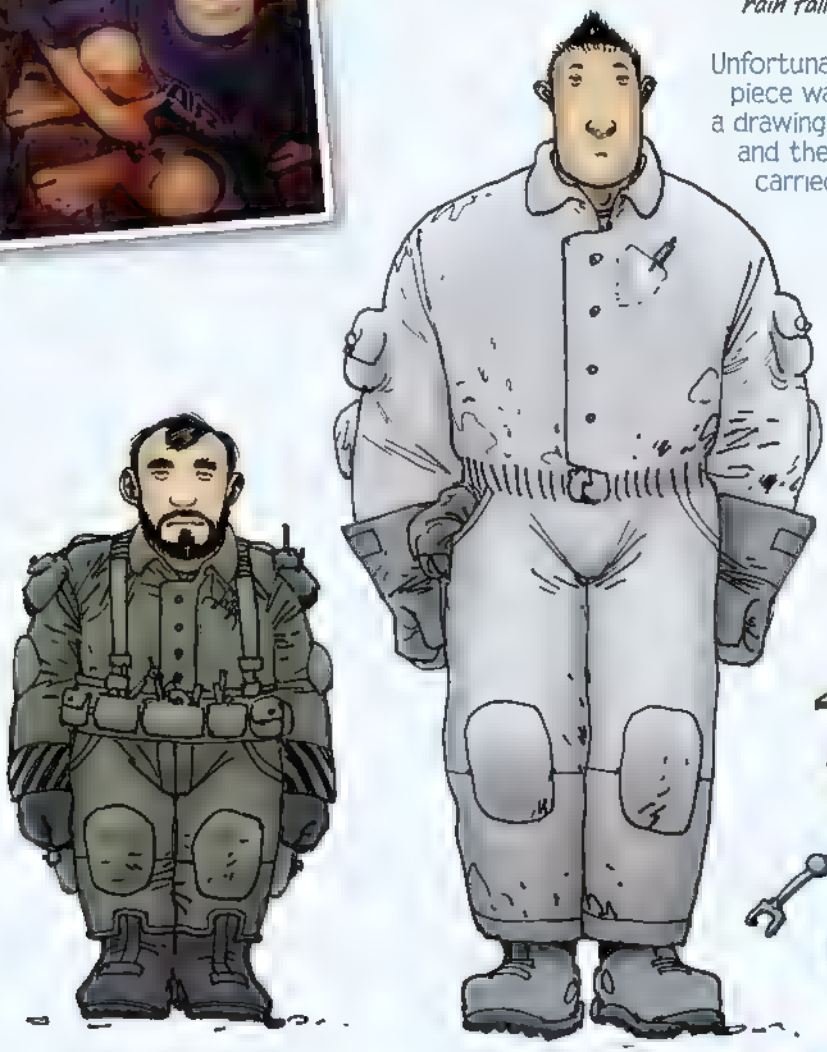
So, originally I approached inker Juan Vlasco to bring the beautiful sketch of Ladrönn's, opposite, to life. In my email to Juan, I wrote:

In our story, Hip has recently hurt one of his friends while under the control of the evil MAPPO corporation that created him. Now he is no longer under MAPPO's control he is remorseful and I would like to see him in this thoughtful moment. Note though that Jose shows Hip here as if at home... I would like to see him at his place of work, looking through one of the big arched windows -- it is important though that we see rain falling just as it is here.

Rich!

Unfortunately, Juan Vlasco fell sick and this piece was never realized... we dropped in a drawing Ladrönn created some years ago and the mood and tone of the page was carried over to Pia's page, and J. Scott Campbell's cover for issue #30.

However, this is a good opportunity to recognize Ladrönn's other contribution to this volume (and last)... in 2006, out of the blue, Ladrönn sent me this sketch (coloured here by Gregory Wright) of "Miki's fellow mechanics." Their names, TIK TOK, TINY and TOOL sprang to mind instantly but it still took me four years to introduce them into the story!



LADRÖNN: 2006

Rich! pickings

Although I'm NEVER happy having to wait for each issue of HIP FLASK while Ladrönn works on new volumes of THE INCAL with Alejandro Jodorowsky, I can't deny that the finished work leaves me breathless with wonder. The third volume will have to wait while Ladrönn completes work on issues #4 and #5 of HIP FLASK. Meantime, track down the second FINAL INCAL on the Amazon France website -- available in both colour and black and white editions, and LICK EVERY PAGE!

LADRÓN
2005

MARIAN CHURCHLAND

MARIAN! Brandon says you're up for a page in our 25th issue? Here's what I'm looking for from you...

While under MAPPO influence, Hip Flask injured Miki's SKYCAB buddy, a tall, wide mechanic called TINY... Tiny is in a coma and is lying in a hospital bed. We are looking over the bed, and Tiny's sleeping head (there are tubes up his nose, patches on his head and wires hanging down from futuristic Marian-tech hospital machines) over at Miki, who is sitting cross-legged on a wicker chair looking somewhat sad and concerned in a dreamy way. She blames Hip for Tiny's injuries but may be brooding about him even as she worries at Tiny's bedside.

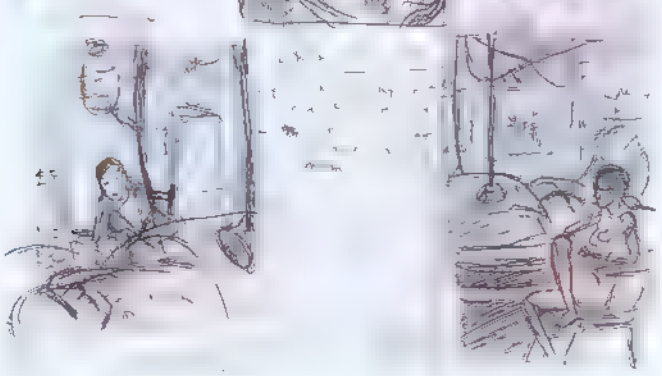
Miki wears a t-shirt on which is written the word ICHINEN, and the image of a lion pouncing.

It's daytime, but the light isn't too bright as it's raining outside, so it would be nice to see rain on a window either behind Miki or above the bed Tiny is lying in. Miki should be the focus of the page, we only to see Tiny from the shoulders up, sleeping quietly under crisp hospital bedsheets and blankets.

The whole issue is a reminiscence by a human character called Gruenwald covering the history of the Elephantmen from his point of view. A handful of captions on this page will describe the events depicted.

Full colour as per Brandon's note is fine. Thanks, Marian!

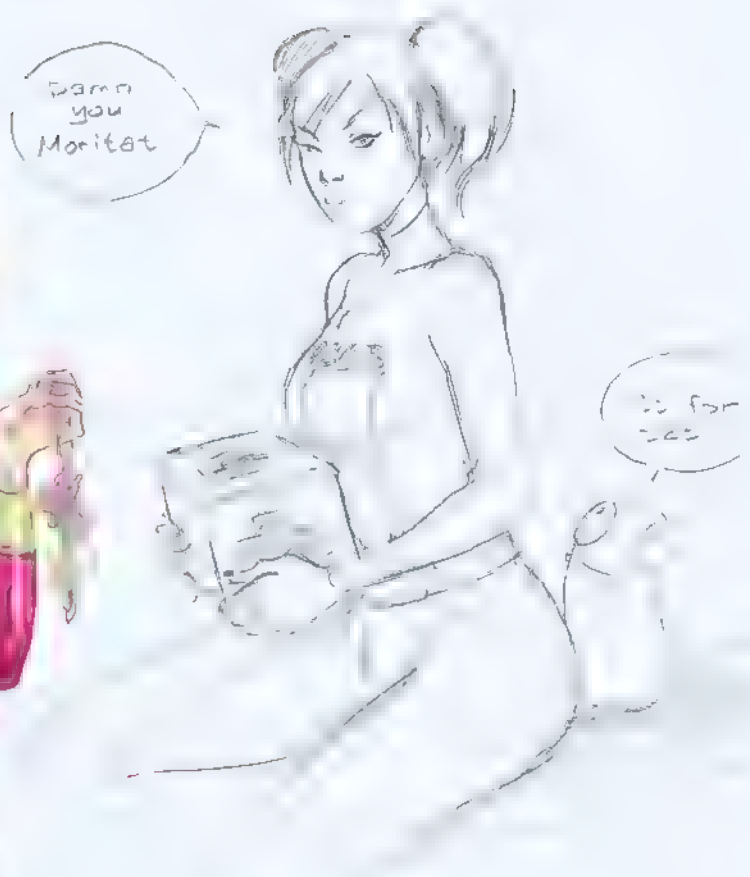
Rich!



Above: Marian's warm up sketch for ELEPHANTMEN #18, "Bad Girl."

Right & Opposite: Marian's colour thumbnail sketches for her page in ELEPHANTMEN #25, which inspired me to return to the scene in issue #26.

Below: This colour figure of Miki was created for the ELEPHANTMEN: DAMAGED GOODS collection of Marian's work on the series.

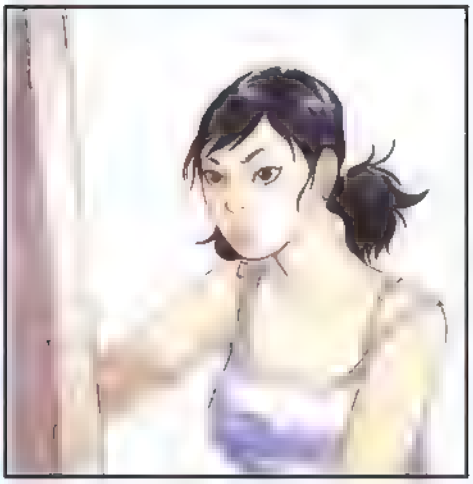


Above and Left: Marian drew these first sketches of Miki at Wondercon in 2008 when Moritat invited her to sit down at the Image booth, then ran off, leaving her alone with a blank sheet of papers and eager fans waiting for sketches!

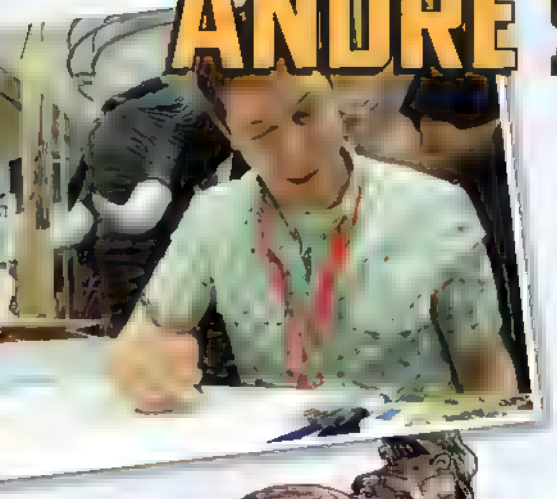
Opposite & Overleaf: Pencils and finished colours for the special plate included with copies of Marian's DAMAGED GOODS collection sold at shows in 2009.

Right: Watercolour studies of Miki in her garage studio for ELEPHANTMEN #18, later abandoned in favour of marker pen illustrations.

Below: A warm up sketch of Vanity Case for ELEPHANTMEN #19, and another sketch of Vanity for a fan at APE 2009.

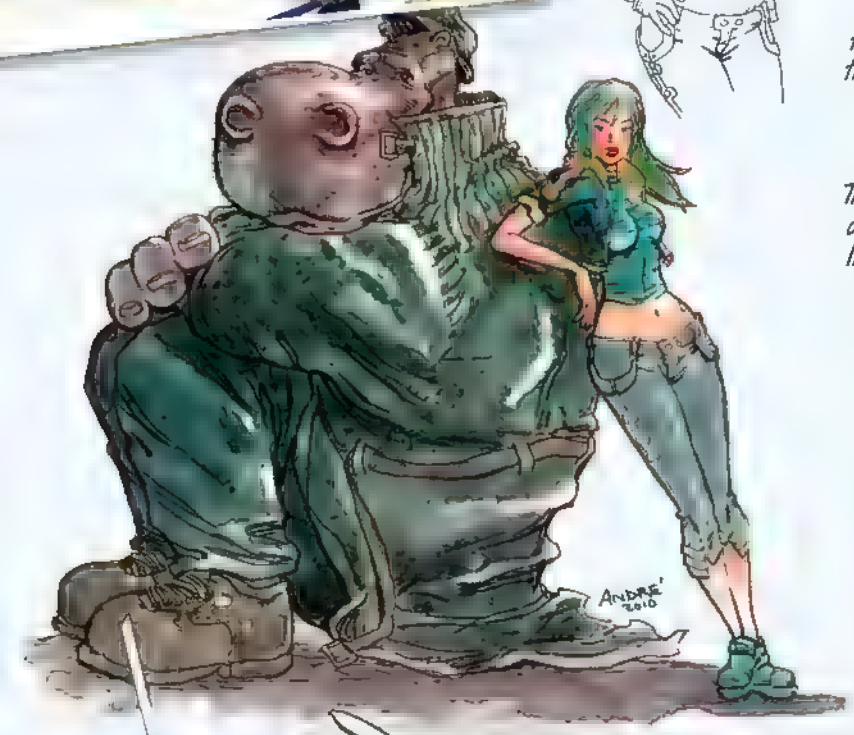


ANDRÉ SZYMANOWICZ



Ebony FULL FIGURE is leaving the Information Agency AT NIGHT, in the rain, through a rear exit of the building. The architecture should be a Da Vinci Code arch... maybe this is a slightly high angle ?

Eb is in his raincoat, collar pulled up around his neck in a pretense of anonymity but yes, it's raining, and that hasn't stopped Elephantmen fangirls from waiting outside for him. He should be the sheepish ELEPHANTMEN #1 Ebony, not the more MATRIX Ebony you've drawn in sketches...

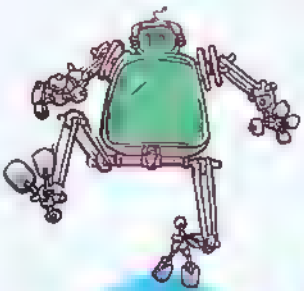


There should be four or five elated fangirls and one of them should be BRANWYN from Image -- Do NOT tell her about this -- with her red hair in braids and a basket of cupcakes she is trying to give to Ebony. She is grinning from ear to ear.

All the girls are in their mid-twenties and one or more have plunging, cleavage revealing necklines. Maybe one is offering her boobs for an autograph, pen in hand, and another has her back to us and has dropped her shirt down to flash her boobs at Ebony (so we see her bare back); Ebony is embarrassed, trying not to look and raising his hands to ward off all the attention, even as he tries to move through the girls. Two or three of those tubular paparazzi cameras Ladrönn invented are hovering around the scene.

A handful of captions and balloons on each page will describe the events depicted.

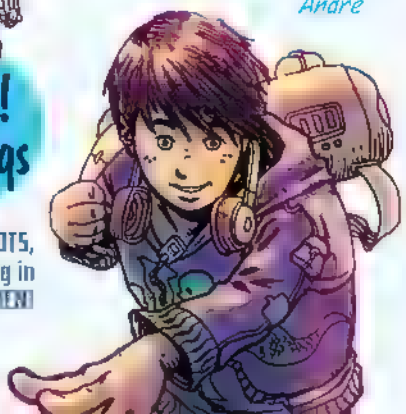
Rich!



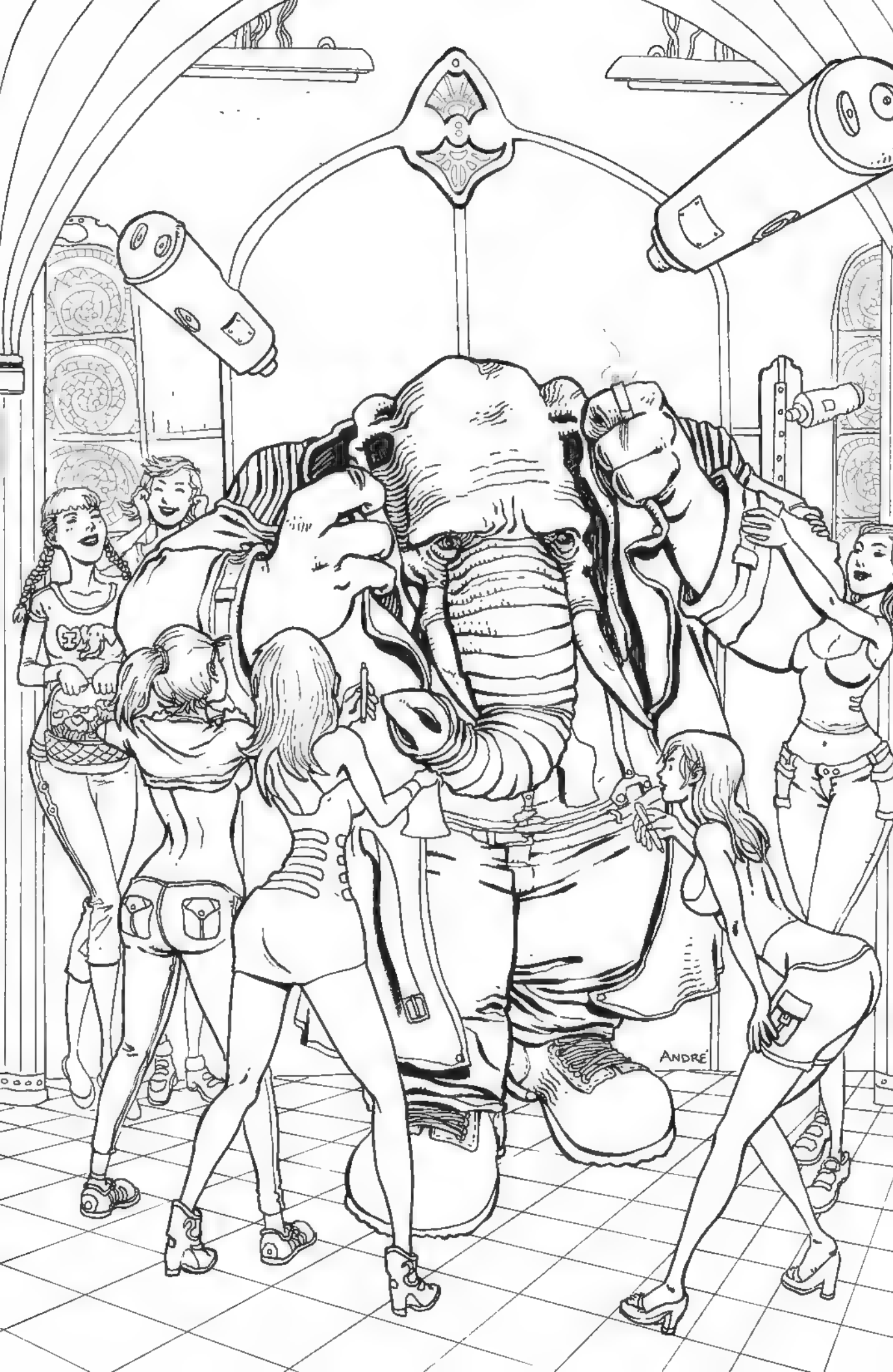
Sounds great!
I'm on it!
Holy cow, what a scene!

Andre

Rich! pickings



CHARLEY LOVES ROBOTS, now running in ELEPHANTMEN!


ANDRÉ

This Page & Opposite: Sketches for fans at Wondercon & Baltimore Comic Con, 2010

EAT HERE
SUSHI
NACHOS
ANDRE' SZYMANOWICZ
BALTIMORE 2010

DAVE! Nikken. In his High Security cell from HIP FLASK CONCRETE JUNGLE, he's standing full figure, body slightly toward us but head turned to the slit window that runs along the side of his observation cell. The wall curves away from us.

He should look strong and arrogantly content -- not evil, just self-assured. Hands held behind his back like a vicar or brigadier. Suit as per Ladrönn.

Easy.

Rich!

Did you say "Easy?!" This turned into one of the toughest drawings I ever did. I've done it in colour because the colour is so integral to the image. I kept removing more and more detail until this is all that was left. It's actually a lot easier to hide behind detail and shadow. I don't know how Justin and Ladrönn do this kind of drawing all the time. It drove me insane!

The thinking behind the ultra-minimalist result is that Nikken is in this totally empty environment - the slit window has become his entire universe. He just has that view of the desert and the thoughts in his head...

Art should bleed by the way.

(I mean the page should bleed. Not making any heavy statement about "ART")

DAVE!

DAVID HINE

Rich! pickings

Dave's biggest and best work -- listed in Paul Gravett's book GRAPHIC NOVELS as one of the top 100 graphic novels of all time -- was recently put back into print by Image Comics. Digitally remastered, coloured by FLANIMALS co-creator Rob Steen and lettered and designed by those awfully nice chaps at Comicraft, STRANGE EMBRACE AND OTHER NIGHTMARES is a modern gothic psychosexual tortured romance and is not for the nervous!

CHRIS BURNHAM
AND AARON KUDER

CHRIS! Another body lying on a gurney for you, Chris -- this one is a version of the SIMM droid, but one with bleached blond Roy Batty hair. Also, he's naked but for briefs. I'll send you Boo Cook's cover for reference for his head and shoulders. His chest area has also been smashed and reveals inner workings like Ash in ALIEN. There should be pools of fluid -- blue goo under him.

So, we're looking DIRECTLY down, five characters surround the figure on the slab and we see the whole of the droid's figure. Standing around the autopsy table is a surgeon, with mask and implements, he's standing at the top of the page by the droid's head; Gruenwald, in his jacket and tie, Hip Flask and Ebony WITHOUT trenchcoats but with shirts, suspenders and cut off ties, and Vanity Case in her regular gear. This page refers specifically to the droid captured in issue #24 -- not the one stalking Vanity. However Vanity looks a little queasy and is standing a little way away from the body behind Hip on the right. Ebony and Gruenwald are to the left looking intent on the body. The surgeon is talking and may be making some gesture with his hand toward the droid.

Above: From my sketchbook.

Left: Chris's Warmup sketch for issue #9.

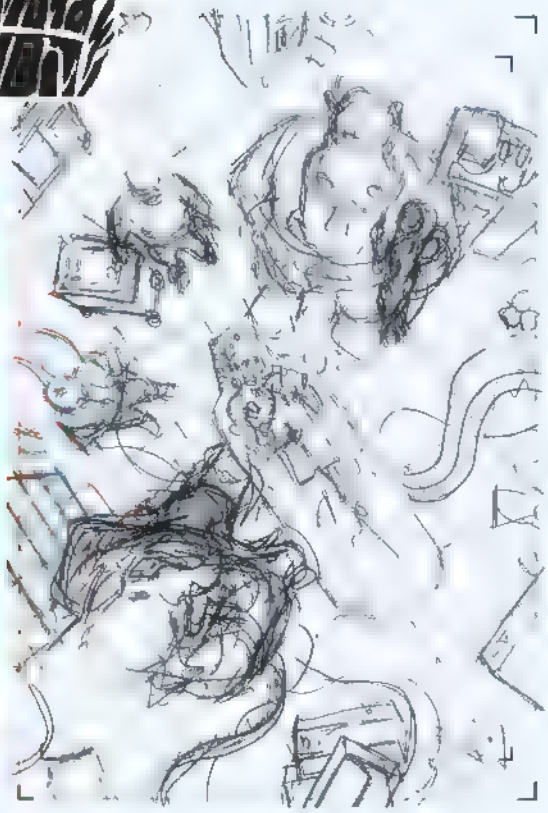
It's laid out and in Aaron's hands... should be done end of the week. CHRIS!

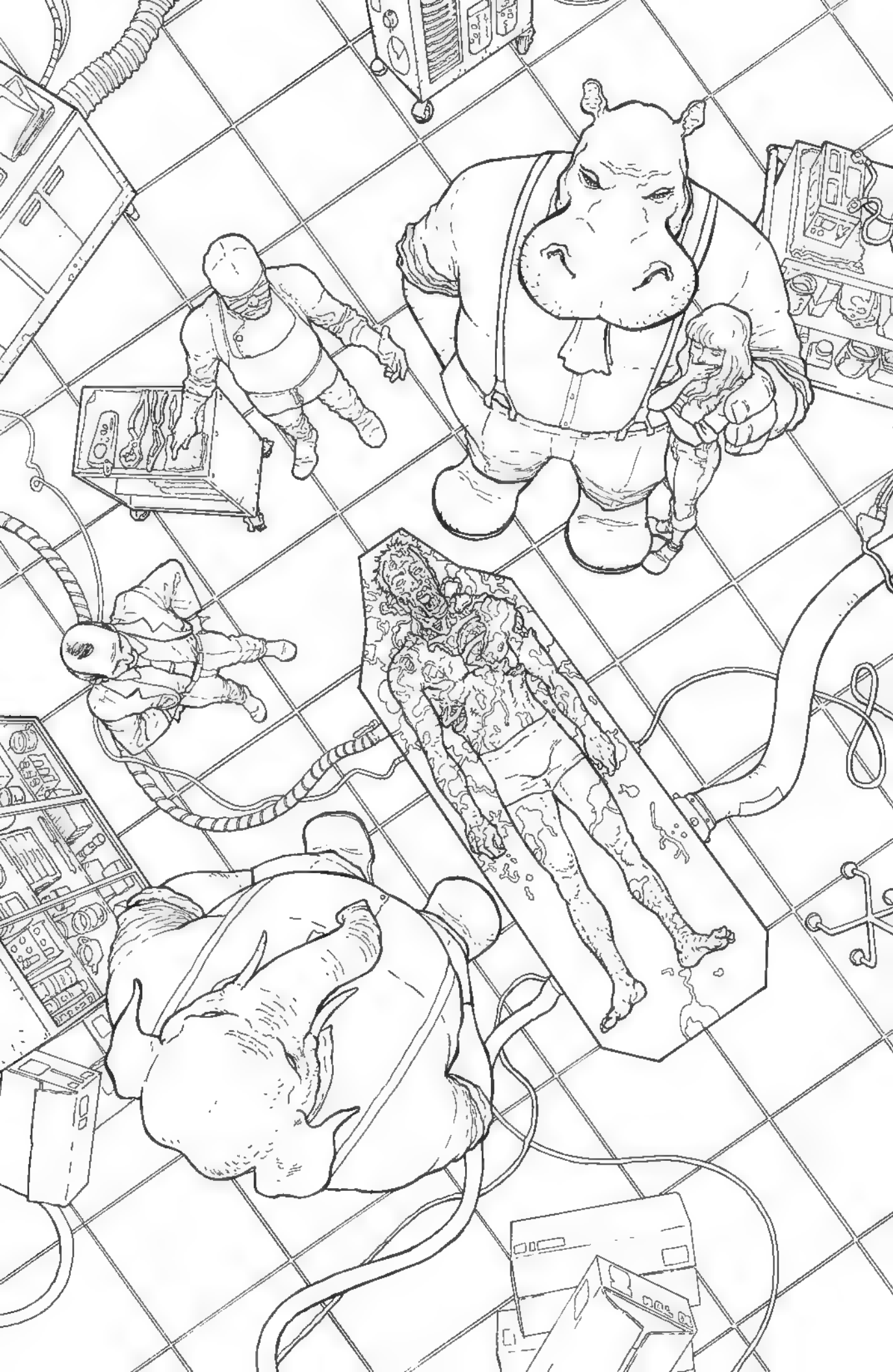
GREAT! Make sure Aaron remembers: "Vanity looks a little queasy."

Rich!

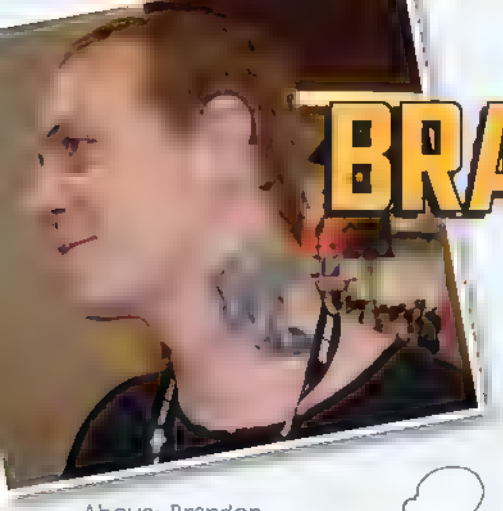
Rich! pickings

I once asked Chris to consider taking on ELEPHANTMEN every month... but he must've known he needed more time perfecting his art before he could handle this much awesomeness. OFFICER DOWNE is pretty good though!





BRANDON GRAHAM



Below: From Brandon's sketchbook and mine... watch for a tasty wraparound cover from Brandon soon!

Above: Brandon Graham IS the Boy with the Elephant Tattoo!

BRANDON! Great... I already sent Marian the description for her page...

What I'd like from you is a shot of Vanity standing outside what is basically an autopsy room door. Vanity should be in full Vanity gear; striped silver top and blue jacket with yellow epaulets.

She has learned something that has disturbed her and her eyes are wide open in shock and her hand is covering her mouth in dismay. Yes, Shock AND Dismay!

On the left of the page is the doorway to the room and inside the door a few feet into the room, we can see Ebony, in shirt, tie and suspenders, looking out as if thinking -- "What was Vanity so shocked AND dismayed about?" He looks calm, hands in pockets.

The whole issue ("THE BIG PICTURE") is a reminiscence by a human character called Gruenwald covering the history of the Elephantmen from his point of view. A handful of captions on this page will describe the events depicted.

Colour is fine! Let me know if you need anything -- reference to follow!

Thanks Rich!

DAN McDAID

DAN! Here's your Choice Page!

Just sent you reference for the character GRUENWALD.

The whole issue is reminiscence by a human character called Gruenwald. Your page is toward the end of the issue; Gruenwald is standing with his back to us in his office, jacket on, hands on hips looking at Hip and Ebony. We see all three characters FULL FIGURE but Ebony and Hip are so big that they bleed off the page, left and right. Gruenwald stands in the middle, his body language that of, "What am I going to do with the two of you?" There expressions should be slightly sheepish.

We haven't seen Gruenwald's office yet but it should be like a newspaper editor's office -- all windows so he can see out into the work area.

Rich!

Hi Rich,

Thanks for the ref. I will do this next week (if I can wait that long!)

One question, is Gruenwald behind a desk when he's shouting at Hip and Ebony?

Thanks again for the opportunity to have a play with your toys,

Cheers, DAN

No, no desk -- Gruenwald is standing with his back to us, and he's not shouting, he's exasperated... As a teacher would be with naughty schoolboys.

From DANMCDAID.BLOGSPOT.COM: I have to admit, I kind of panicked when it came time to draw this... Rich has been a hero of mine since I was a nipper, one of the hallowed bullpen at Marvel UK in the eighties, and therefore involved, in one capacity or another, with some of my favourite comics. DOCTOR WHO, TRANSFORMERS, THUNDERCATS... I was even pretty nuts about THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS for a while. So when it came time to draw something for him, I probably froze up a bit And while I'm quite pleased with how this page came out, I really would like another go..

Rich! pickings

Although I liked Dan's art on JERSEY GODS, it was the story he wrote for the DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE that made me sit up and pay attention -- this guy can Draw AND Write... His story, illustrated by Rob Davis, was a brilliant pastiche of, and homage to, Will Eisner's THE SPIRIT.

TOM SCIOLI

TOM! The whole issue is a reminiscence by a human character called Gruenwald covering the history of the Elephantmen from his point of view. A handful of captions and balloons on each page will describe the events depicted.

I'm looking for a full figure shot of Blackthrone (this page introduces the character). She's about 40, hardbitten by experiences in the war and she does not like Elephantmen. She is being brought in by the LAPD to keep an eye on Hip Flask and Ebony! She should be holding a bigass gun in one hand and her other hand hooked up, finger pointing up! Go mostly by Boo Cook's cover design -- glasses, jacket, gun and all!

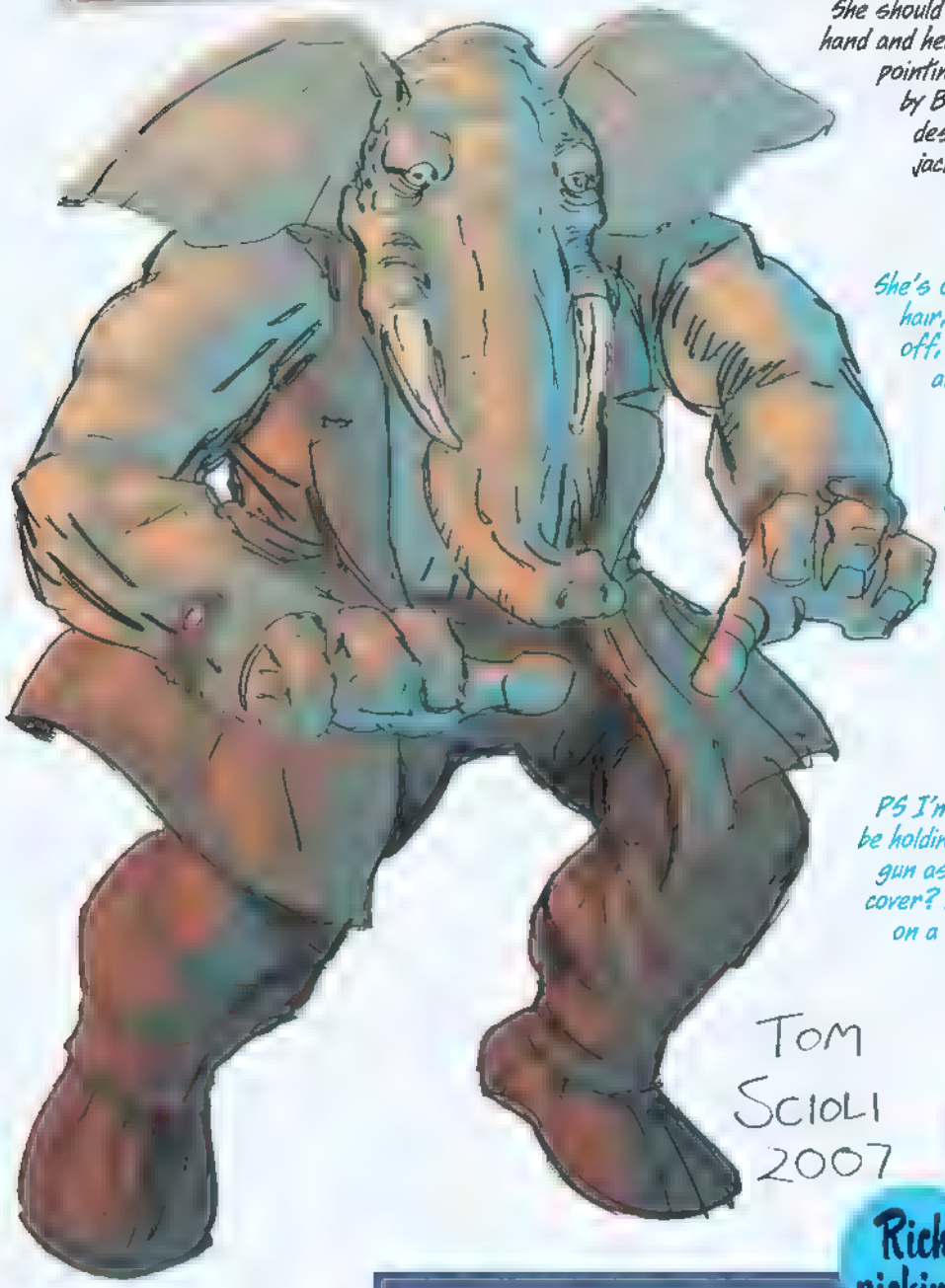
Rich!

Rich...

She's over 40, sexy, salt-and-pepper hair, in a leotard with the sides cut off, big guns... is Blackthorne your answer to Nick Fury's Countess Valeria? I figured, to give it a Steranko feel, you could color everything, except the big gun, leaving it white. Just a thought. Feel free to drop out the shadows I've drawn at the bottom of the rib cage and the abdomenal area, or convert it to a color other than black if it looks too heavy.

Thanks, Tom

PS I'm assuming the giant gun she'll be holding in this page is not the same gun as the one she's carrying on the cover? It's probably because I've been on a Steranko kick lately that I saw her as the Countess.

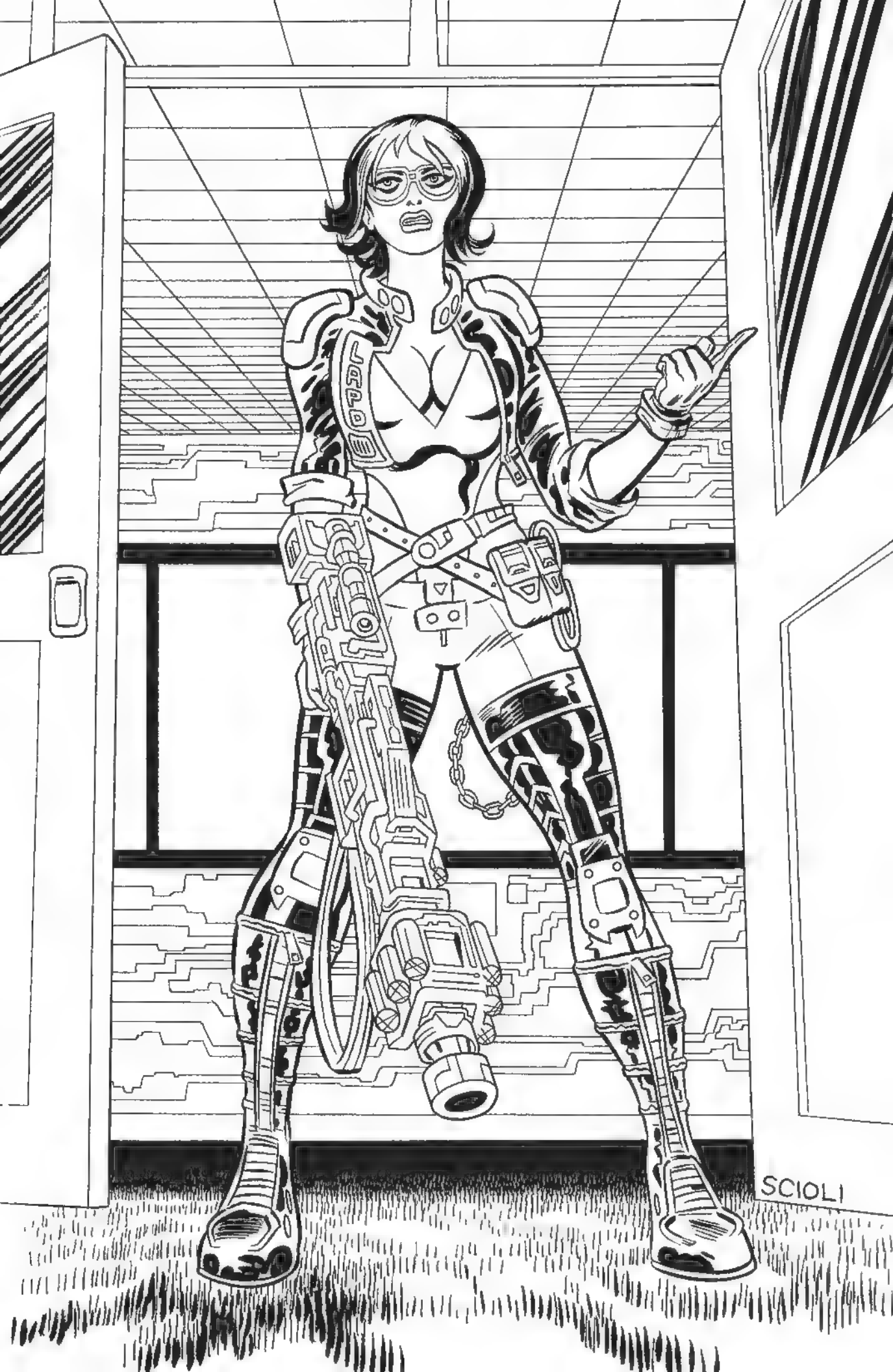


Tom Scioli 2007

Rich! pickings

Tom Scioli's art is both Jacktastic and Kirbyrific... he is a veritable drawing machine and somehow manages to turn out a whole issue (pencils AND inks, PLUS covers!) of GODLAND every month while holding down a steady job as well.

COLOR: GABRIEL BAUTISTA


SCIOLI

PIA GUERRA

This is a sort of sad bookend to the issue. The character, Gruenwald, bears his responsibility to the Elephantmen a little too heavily -- and his marriage has suffered.

Now he must work another late night. In the foreground is a photo on a credenza that is close to the wall on the side of the office. It shows Gruenwald with his blonde, 29-year-old wife. In the photo they are smiling. Your page should have the same mood as Tim's -- Tim's is first, yours is last.

Outside the window we can make a Blade Runner type skyline, but just silhouettes, it's already late evening.

A poignant caption on this page will read AND THERE ARE CASUALTIES.

In this case, the marriage.

Is Gruenwald drinking in this shot? Booze, coffee?

Booze or coffee -- your choice!

Rich!

Yeah, we all love Pia on Y THE LAST MAN, and we know what a cute couple Pia and hubby, writer Ian Boothby make.. but sorry, Ian, you still don't get to draw a page for issue #25...

Rich! pickings

AXEL MEDELLIN

AXEL! Thanks for taking this on. Please study the reference I sent you a little earlier after reading the page description...

The evil corporation responsible for the creation of the Elephantmen -- MAPPO -- has resurfaced in Los Angeles... in fact they are UNDERNEATH the city somewhere, with a base in what appear to be vast unused flood drains.

As you'll see from the reference, the MAPPO base has curved walls... however, for your page, imagine a tunnel about 36 feet deep. We are looking directly at the side of the tunnel and we see six Elephantmen restoration tanks -- two tiers of three tanks lined up in uniform manner, one alongside the other -- before us. Kryten, the MAPPO scientist with the goatee beard is standing full figure on a catwalk that runs in front of the higher tier of tanks. His hands clasp the rail of the catwalk as he looks out proudly toward us.

In each of the tanks we will see the silhouette of a crocodileman curled up much like the close up you see at the end of the reference. Just need pencils and inks from you on this -- not colour!

Think BORG! from Star Trek and Ladrönn from HIP FLASK UNNATURAL SELECTION, naturally!

When will you be free to do a whole issue?

Really? I have this month pretty much booked with Cho's book and the baby, but from April 1st on, whenever you want, I'd love to!

Best, AXEL

Or, now that I have given it some thought (notice my gung-ho enthusiasm!), if you already have an script for an issue you would need done in about two and a half or three months, bring it on...

Best,

Axel

What do you want to draw?

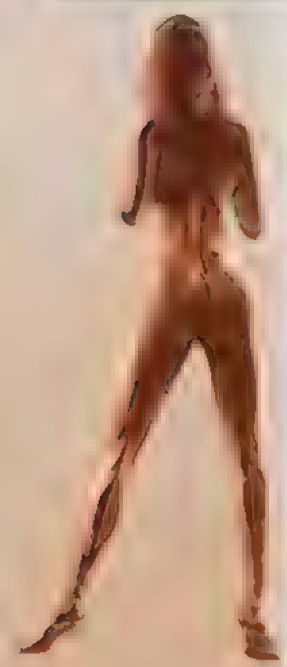
Rich!

NOW you are spoiling me...

Well... Elephantmen, obviously, the more variety the better... I have a weakness for hot girls, so Vanity or Miki would be welcome... I do love those big complex BLADE RUNNEResque cityscapes and high-tech (I'm kinda masochistic that way... one of my favourite comics ever is METABARONS, go figure)... They tell me robots, technology, monsters and girls are my strong points, so I put them at your service..

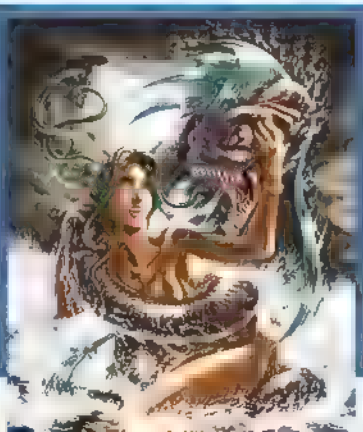
But of course, you are the boss, so anything you need will be just fine. I'm really looking forward to this!

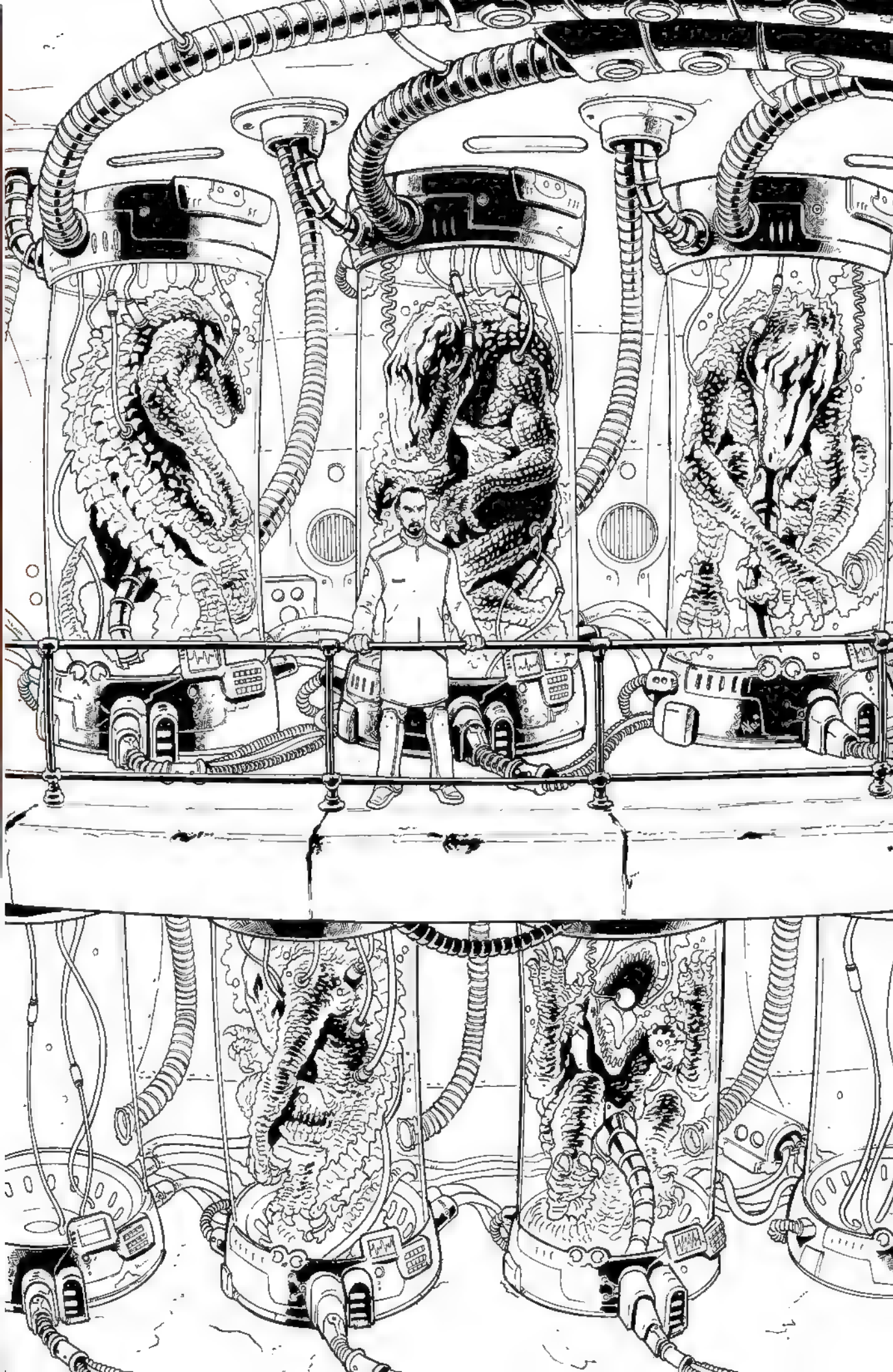
Best, AXEL

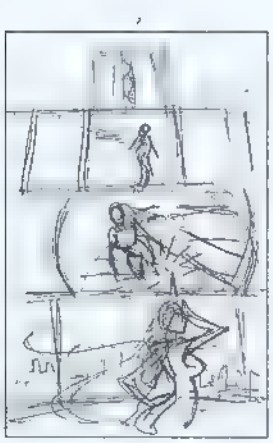


Rich! pickings

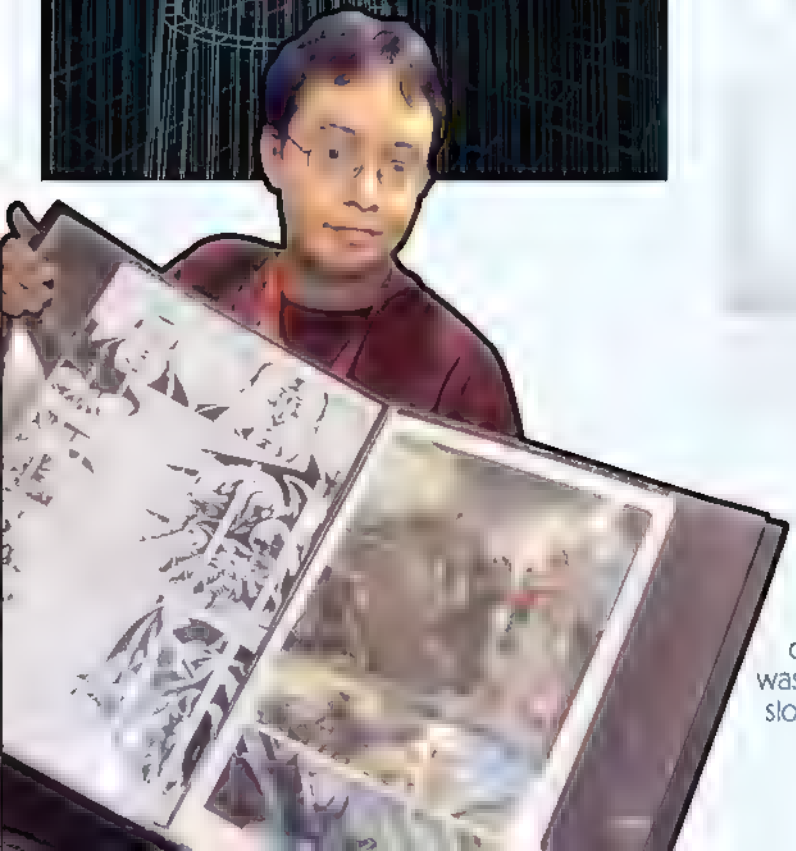
It wasn't until I saw these three pieces from Axel -- and specifically the nude, uh, bottom left -- that I hit upon the idea of suggesting to Axel that he skip the inking part of the process and jump straight from pencils to colours... the effect on his work starting with pages 5 & 6 of issue #29 (originally Axel coloured pages just to help Grey keep on schedule) and continuing into issue #30 was staggering. Originally I'd only intended for the love scene between Nip and Miki to be rendered this way but Axel and I were both so happy with the finished work, we'll be sticking to this style from next issue on... maybe if I'd asked him to colour his page of #25 we'd have got to this point a lot faster! Watch for 50 GIRLS 50 later this year!







Above & Left: After Axel got his first pages of script for ELEPHANTMEN #26, I received the thumbnails above and the wireframe model of Ivory Towers, detailing the exact location of the winding staircase Sahara ascends in the page you see pencilled below...



Opposite & Previous Page: Axel approached me at the ELEPHANTMEN booth in San Diego in both 2008 AND 2009 with this Gorgeous samp.e page in black and white AND colour. He really captured the look and feel of the characters and the city in one page so it was really only a matter of time before the slow-acting poison he'd slipped in Moritat's Mocha Latte started taking effect...

SAHARA

This Page & Opposite: At some point during the previous 25 issues of ELEPHANTMEN, I got stuck on the idea that Sahara ALWAYS wore diaphonous white veils and never left home... issue #26 was a deliberate move on my part to show the proactive side of Sahara's personality... Axel dressed her in the black dress opposite inspired by the outfit worn by Sahara lookalike and bellydance consultant, Monifa, at Wondercon, 2010.

Sahara returns to her white desert look in this San Diego Comic Con sketch...

This Page: Axel's first version of this sequence presented both Horn and Sahara as somewhat uncertain looking... his second attempt, overleaf, really nailed their self confidence and poise.

PANYA

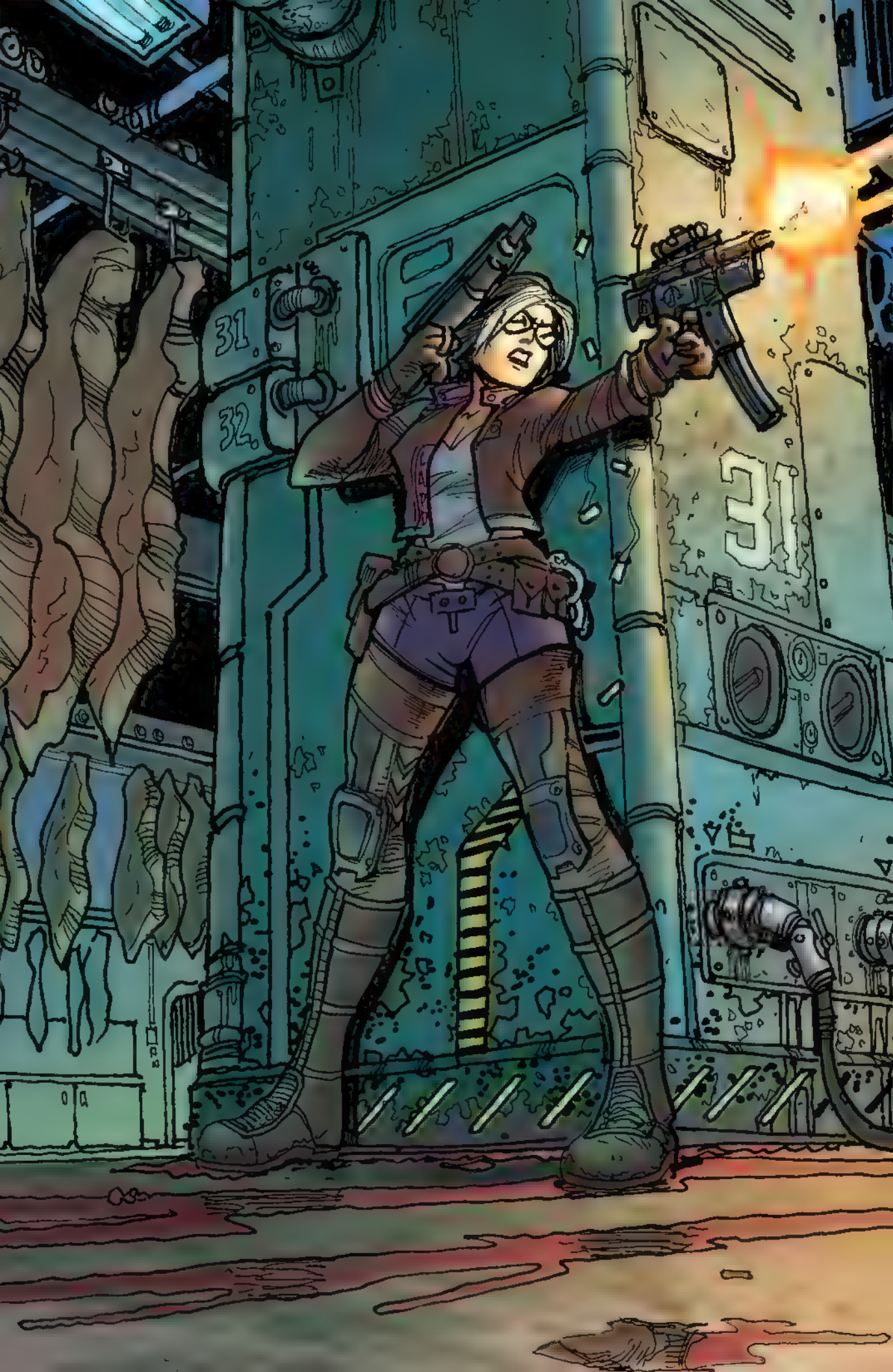
This Page & Opposite: Inevitably, the appearance of a new character like Panya, who Sahara has befriended to function as her double, opens up new stories and possibilities for BOTH characters. All actions have consequences and all impulses can lead to new frustrations.

BLACKTHORNE

Midd.e: Moritat proposed "A Sexy Female L.A.P.D. cop" for this story arc, and I was happy to oblige. Imagine my surprise then, when he asked Marian to design her!

Opposite: Moritat's splash page for #26, from a layout by Vince Lee (Top Right), inspired by art I first saw on Justin's Deviant page (Top Left).

Above Right and Left: "Marian draws clothing so much better than I do," was Moritat's excuse... Well, as long as he was drawing the story itself, right? Justin's sketches developed Blackthorne's look; adding the plunging neckline and the leather jacket.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32
31

Above: Another preliminary sketch by Moritat showing Blackthorne's size in relation to Hip... and to establish her astonishingly long legs!

Opposite & Overleaf: Axel's pencils and inks for the new splash page introducing Blackthorne.

Above: Boo's first sketch for the cover of #26 made Backthorne looks a little too awkward...

Right: In Boo's final pencils she looks way more formidable!

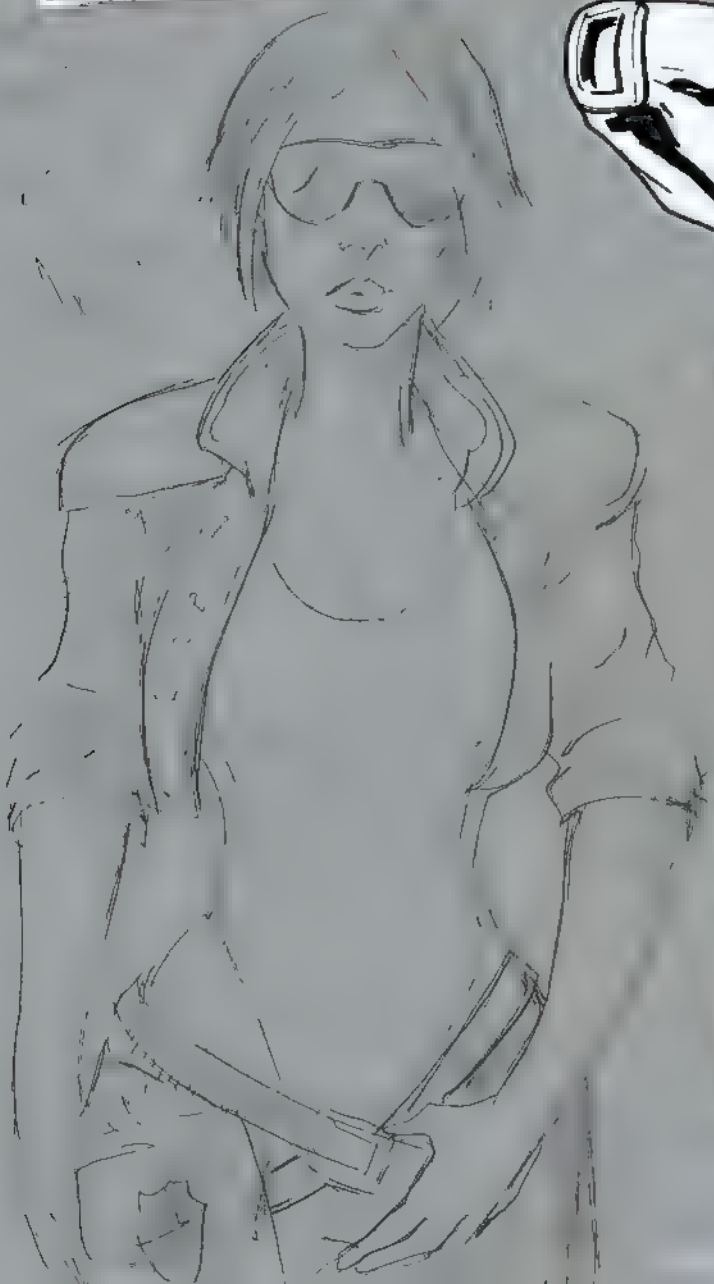
WILD WISDOM

Opposite: On The Drawing Board! Boo Cook's rough sketches and work in progress for the cover of this volume

Above: My thumbnail and Boo's finished pencils!

LAPD

FOR
CHANN
SOCC·10



LAPD

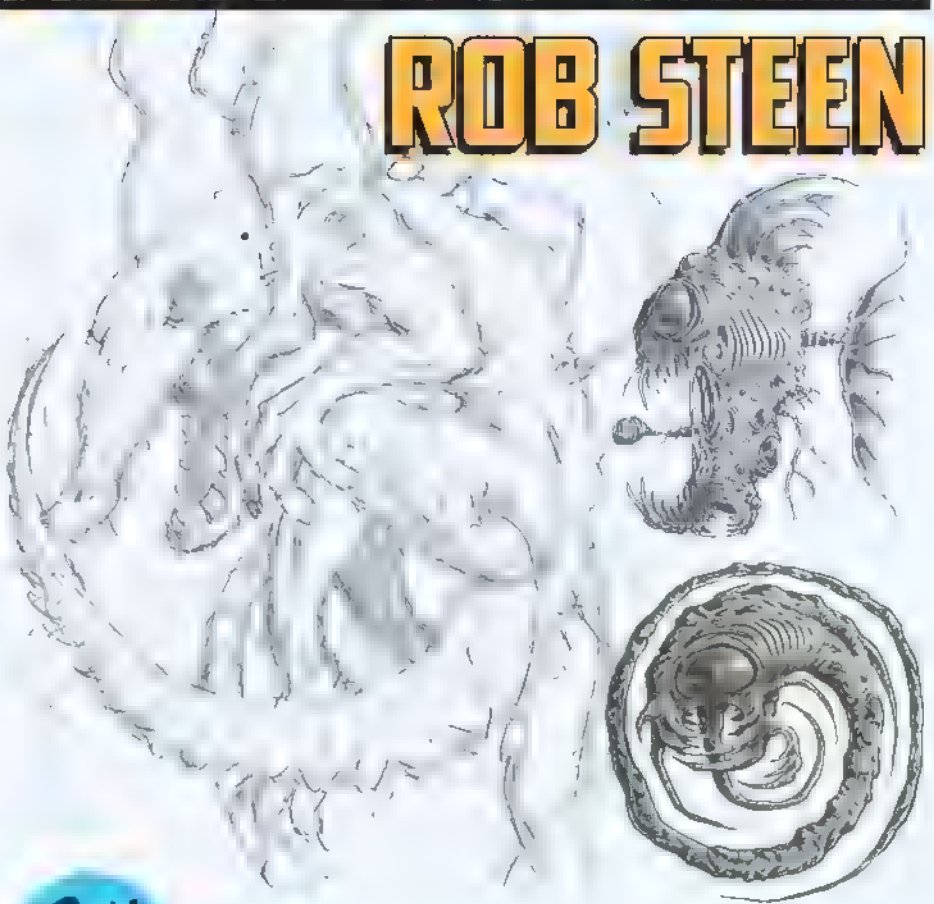
ROB! In issue #26, Five Crocs are let loose in a slaughterhouse (THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE)... #25 ends with MAPPO agents preparing their release. Gary Erskine is drawing a page that recaps the restorative tanks used by MAPPO during the war to heal and revive injured Elepantmen (seen only in #21, Boo's issue)... Your page will show one of the crocs in a tank in 2259, only we don't need to see the tank here... just the croc, curled up in almost fetal position, tail curving around. The croc should be naked, hooked up to tubes and feeds, floating in fluid and lit in a manner that heightens the creepiness. One nasty croc eye has just opened -- the previous page will show the MAPPO scientists in their underground lair (like the pipes in the original ITALIAN JOB... big sewer drains that feed into the LA river) about to announce the release of the crocs... so this is a turnover page. I imagine the croc facing to the left of page...?

Rich!

I'll send pencils tomorrow.
This is a full grown Croc, right? Is it okay if I use a wash effect for shading? I can put it on a separate layer for the colorist if that would be easier. Facing to the left -- very funny!

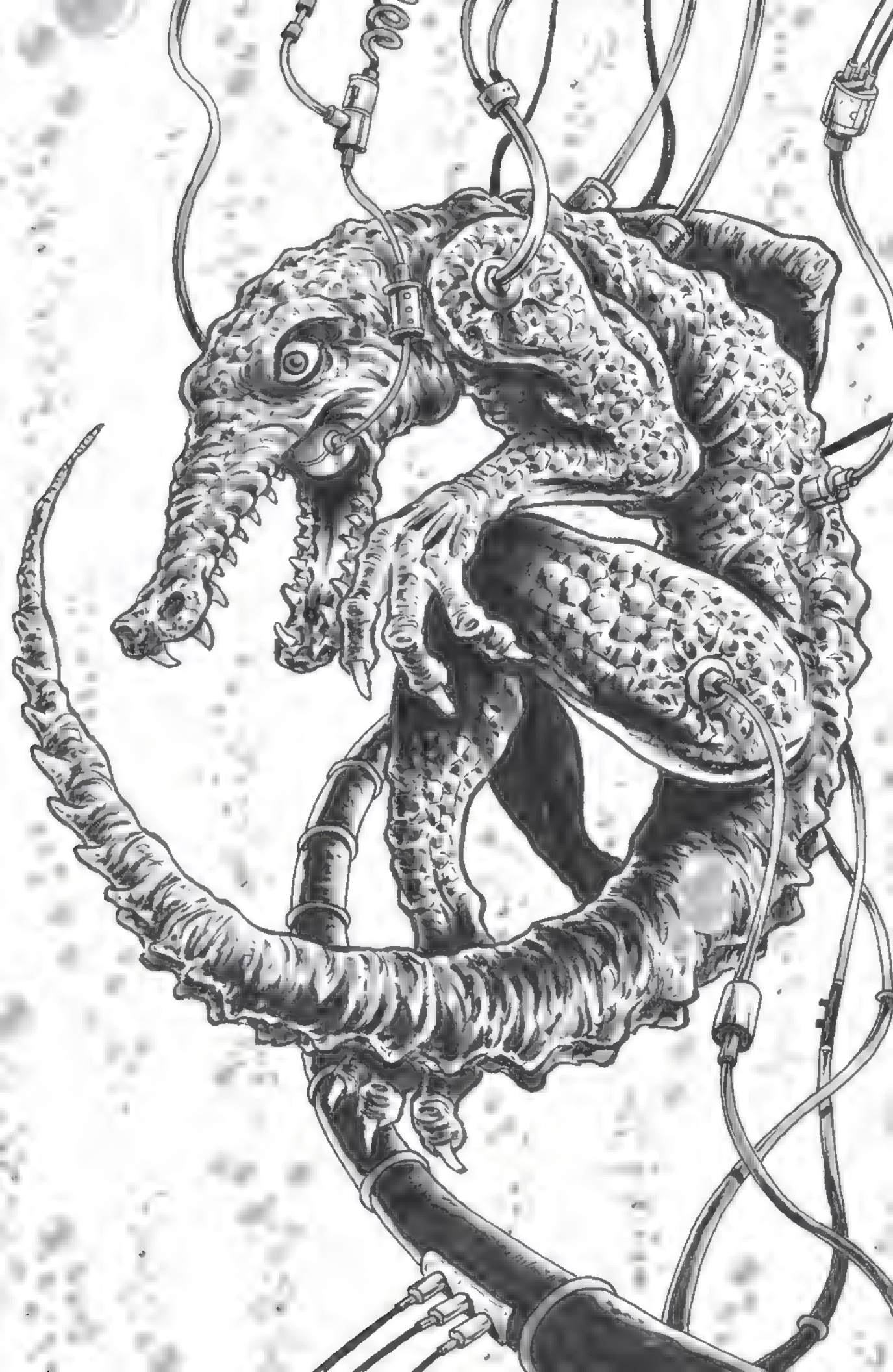
Rob

ROB STEEN



Rich! pickings

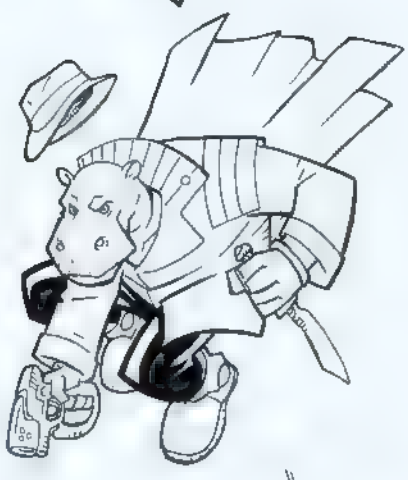
FLANIMALS co-creator, Rob Steen has been posting Weird Fish (mostly facing left) online. Check out my favourites here and then look for your own on his on his blog @ robsteen.blogspot.com.



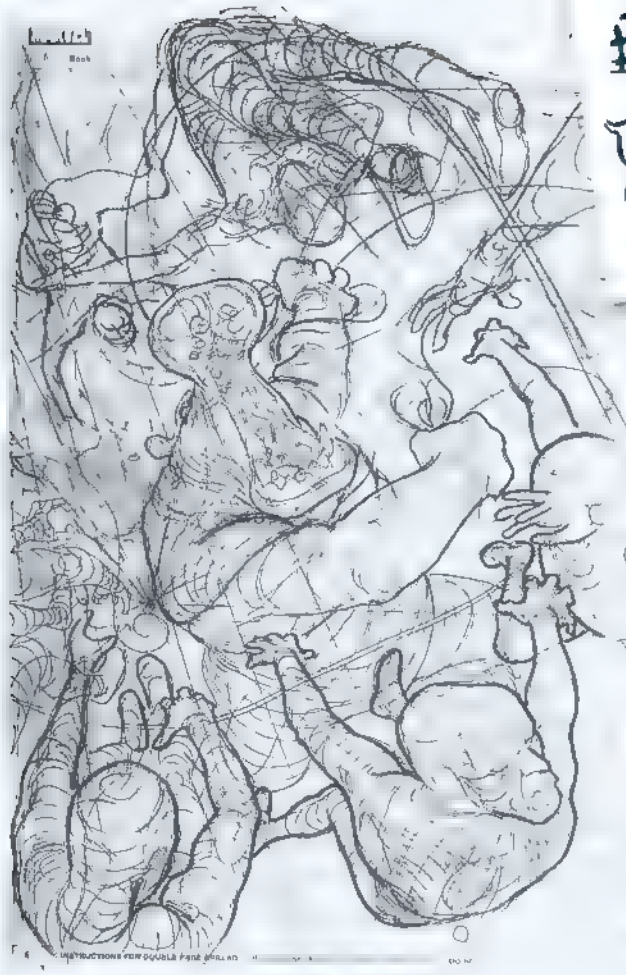
JASON HOWARD

Jason Howard is not only a true gent, but also the artist of ASTOUNDING WOLF MAN and now, SUPER DINOSAUR! But be sure to check out his titanic team up with fellow Image artist, Ryan Ottley... SEA BEAR & GRIZZLY SHARK!

Rich! pickings



Above: Jason did this terrific drawing of Hip Flask in my sketchbook at the Emerald City Show in 2009, but was never happy with it... he presented me with the piece opposite at the Baltimore show that year as a GIFT "to make up for it!" Colours by Gregarious Greg Wright!



STEVE SKROCE

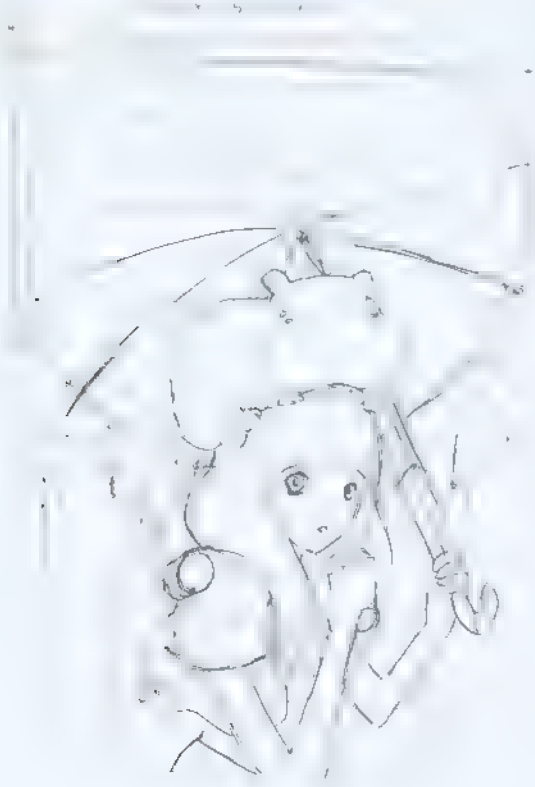
Perhaps best known for his work on THE MATRIX, I got to know superstar artist Steve Skroce when he co-created X-MAN with honorary Elephantman, JEPH LOEB. So when Steve came to us needing a logo for his DOC FRANKENSTEIN comic book with the Wachowskis, we were happy to oblige - and he readily provided us with the cover that adorns this issue in fair exchange. Scour the internet for copies of DOC, which has yet to be collected in trade paperback!

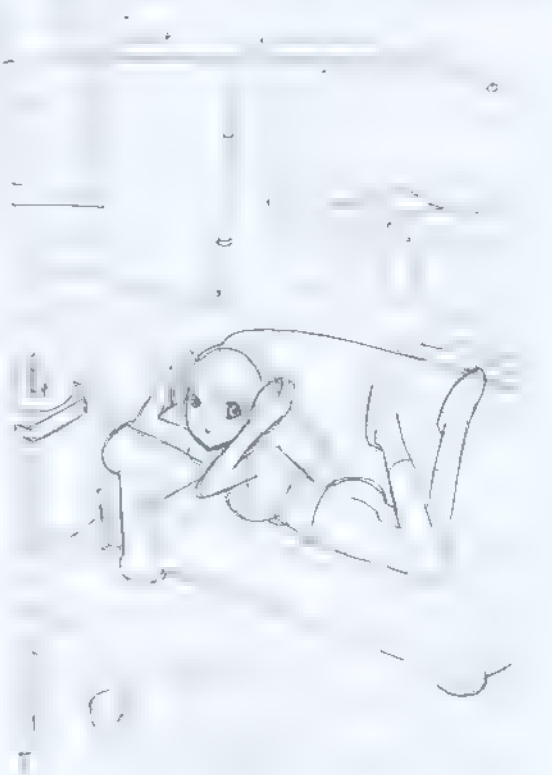
Rich! pickings

CAMILLA D'ERRICO

What first attracted me to Camilla's work was her HELMET GIRLS handbag design (do yourself a big favour and visit camilladerrico.com) seen here when she stopped by the ELEPHANTMEN booth at San Diego in 2010... issue #29's perfectly fragile picture of Vanity is the first of three covers Camilla has agreed to create for ELEPHANTMEN... watch for another in 2011!

Rich! pickings





Left: Me and Lisa (and Totoro) @ TRAVELLING MAN in Leeds!

LISA WOOD

http://thoughtbubblefestival.wordpress.com/2011
http://www.travellingman.com

Rich! pickings Lisa is not only a talented artist, she is the manager of **TRAVELLING MAN** in my hometown of Leeds, **AND** the organizer of **THOUGHT BUBBLE**, one of the best comic book conventions in England!

DAVE SLATER

works with Lisa at **TRAVELLING MAN** in Leeds, and during my signing there, showed me his cheeky cheesecake art on his phone... and sent me the pinup of Miki opposite just a couple of months later! You know if these guys weren't so busy **SELLING** comics to you and me, they just might be **MAKING** comics!

Above: Jeff with Nova Parrish as Miki!

JEFF! Ready? I was going to ask you to draw Vanity rather than Miki this time, but I've had those calendar images stuck in my head and had this idea for something very Beauty and the Beast-ish

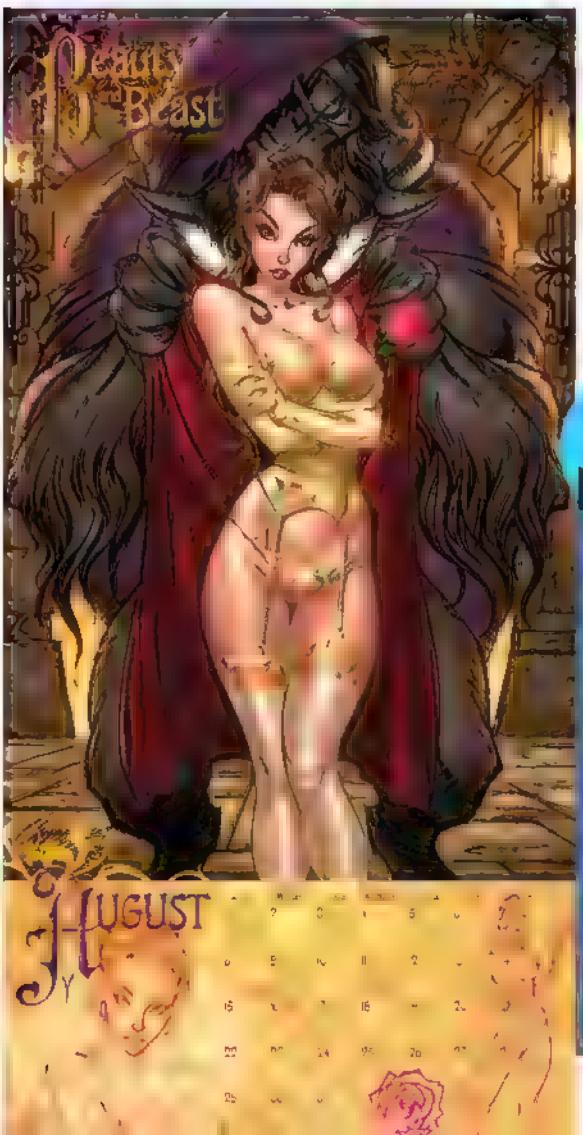
We have an upcoming issue in the story arc, QUESTIONABLE THINGS where Miki... gets it on a little with Hip Flask. A LITTLE! No bestial sex, don't worry.

We're in Hip's apartment and we see Hip's reflection in a TALL mirror behind Miki. He is standing, relaxed in light blue shirt and trousers, with his suspenders down. He holds a big glass of whiskey in his hand.

His eye is caught by Miki's "invitation..." it is sad and lustful at the same time, a hint perhaps of the Beast's growling eye in your calendar. Maybe his face is caught in shadow that accentuates his eye?

Miki, our Japanese American character, has her hair down here, brushed to silky black, and she has made herself up, tastefully, for Hip -- dressed to kill! She is looking right at the reader in that half-shy/half-maneater way. She is so happy that Hip is looking at her with desire.

J. SCOTT CAMPBELL

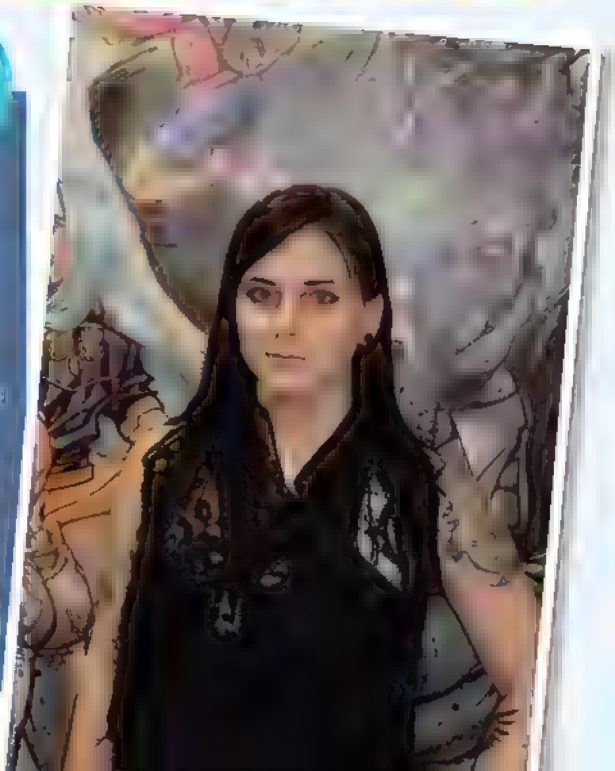


I love the lingerie set in B&B and wonder if you can create something similar for Miki? Her dress, which she's shrugging off, should have a black and white design to suggest the simplicity of Japanese prints and calligraphy. I'm not sure about the pattern on her lingerie -- I wonder if there's some kind of Japanese floral motif. (Time to Google)

NEI RUFFINO

Rich! pickings

Jeff's inspired FAIRYTALE FANTASIES calendar showcases his collaboration with colour artist Nei Ruffino and Comicraft's own JG Roshell. scour eBay for the 2010 edition!



Thanks Rich -- Take a look at this layout sketch (based on your beautiful sketch, of course! ;) Let me know if I'm okay to progress. JSC

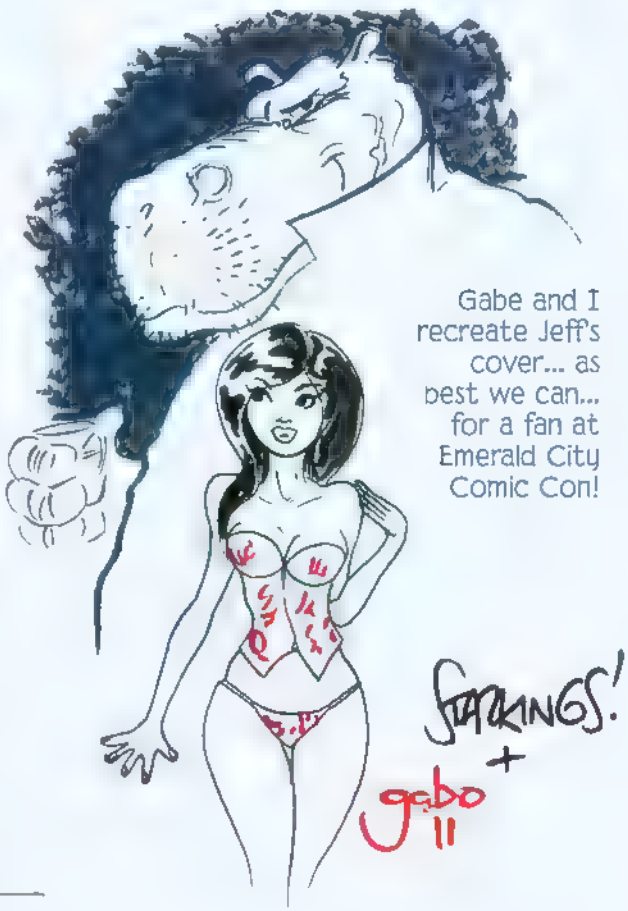
I like the sketch, but feel like it's lost the directness of Miki looking at us/Hip which I liked so much in the Beauty and the Beast art from your calendar.

It feels to me that the interaction in this sketch is more between them and doesn't involve the reader. I really want the reader to fall into Miki's eyes, as we fall into Beauty's... we're always looking for the eyes, in movies, TV and comics...

Hip's pose is perfect but the mirror needs to be flat on the wall, so the reader is perpendicular to it.

I was thinking that Miki would be larger and the mirror indicating Hip a few feet away -- the logo can run down the side, on the wall. Lighting will be very romantic, late evening. Miki cut in front of logo. Maybe make Hip higher and a little bigger in mirror to emphasize his massiveness?

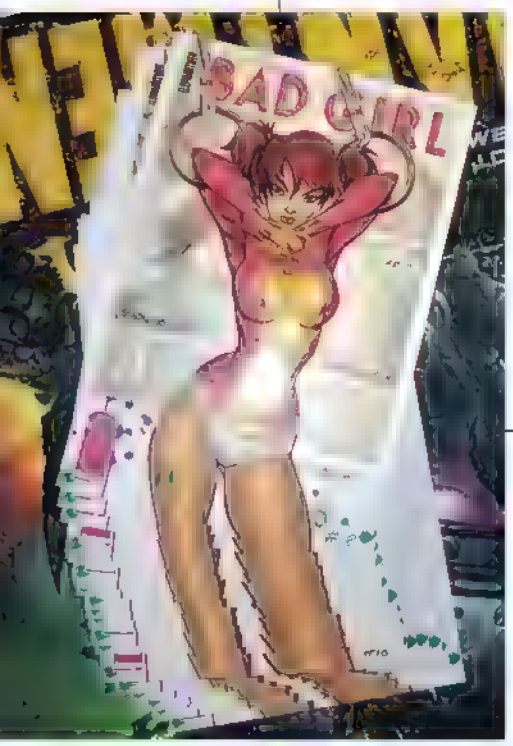
Sorry to be such a fusspot -- I do know I'm in good company, eh, Jeff?! Rich!



Gabe and I recreate Jeff's cover... as best we can... for a fan at Emerald City Comic Con!

Stalkings! + gabo 11

Below and Opposite: Jeff's first cover featuring Miki adorned issue #18. and postcards given out at SDCC 2008...



Overleaf: Hip Flask met Danger Girl in a piece specially created to promote our J. Scott Campbell/DANGER GIRL font collection (still available at comicbookfonts.com!)

Third Page Following: Jeff's illustration of Sahara covered both HIP FLASK: UNNATURAL SELECTION and ELEPHANTMEN #6

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COVER

HIP FLASK

COVER CAMPBELL

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